SHORT WORKS

BY
VOLTAIRE

ANDRÉ DES TOUCHES IN SIAM

André Des Touches was a very agreeable musician in the brilliant reign of Louis XIV., before the science of music was perfected by Rameau, and before it was corrupted by those who prefer the art of surmounting difficulties to nature and the real graces of composition.

Before he had recourse to these talents he had been a musketeer, and before that, in 1688, he went into Siam with the Jesuit Tachard, who gave him many marks of his affection, for the amusement he afforded on board the ship; and Des Touches spoke with admiration of Father Tachard for the rest of his life.

In Siam he became acquainted with the first commissary of Barcalon, whose name was Croutef, and he committed to writing most of those questions which he asked of Croutef, and the answers of that Siamese. They are as follows:

DES TOUCHES.—How many soldiers have you?

CROUTEF.—Fourscore thousand, very indifferently paid.

DES TOUCHES.—And how many talapoins?

CROUTEF.—A hundred and twenty thousand, very idle and very rich. It is true that in the last war we were beaten, but our talapoins have lived sumptuously and built fine houses.

DES TOUCHES.—Nothing could have discovered more judgment. And your finances, in what state are they?

CROUTEF.—In a very bad state. We have, however, about ninety thousand men employed to render them prosperous, and if they have not succeeded, it has not been their fault, for there is not one of them who does not honorably seize all that he can get possession of, and strip and plunder those who cultivate the ground for the good of the state.

DES TOUCHES.—Bravo! And is not your jurisprudence as perfect as the rest of your administration?

CROUTEF.—It is much superior. We have no laws, but we have five or six thousand volumes on the laws. We are governed in general by customs; for it is known that a custom, having been established by chance, is the wisest principle that can be imagined. Besides, all customs being necessarily different in different provinces, the judges may choose at their pleasure a custom which prevailed four hundred years ago or one which prevailed last year. It occasions a variety in our legislation which our neighbors are forever admiring. This yields a certain fortune to practitioners. It is

a resource for all pleaders who are destitute of honor, and a pastime of infinite amusement for the judges, who can, with safe consciences, decide causes without understanding them.

DES TOUCHES.—But in criminal cases—you have laws which may be depended upon?

CROUTEF.—God forbid! We can condemn men to exile, to the galleys, to be hanged; or we can discharge them, according to our own fancy. We sometimes complain of the arbitrary power of the Barcalon, but we choose that all our decisions should be arbitrary.

DES TOUCHES.—That is very just. And the torture—do you put people to the torture?

CROUTEF.—It is our greatest pleasure. We have found it an infallible secret to save a guilty person, who has vigorous muscles, strong and supple hamstrings, nervous arms, and firm loins, and we gayly break on the wheel all those innocent persons to whom nature has given feeble organs. It is thus we conduct ourselves with wonderful wisdom and prudence. As there are half proofs, I mean half truths, it is certain there are persons who are half innocent and half guilty. We commence, therefore, by rendering them half dead; we then go to breakfast; afterwards ensues entire death, which gives us great consideration in the world, which is one of the most valuable advantages of our offices.

DES TOUCHES.—It must be allowed that nothing can be more prudent and humane. Pray tell me what becomes of the property of the condemned?

CROUTEF.—The children are deprived of it. For you know that nothing can be more equitable than to punish the single fault of a parent on all his descendants.

DES TOUCHES.—Yes. It is a great while since I have heard of this jurisprudence.

CROUTEF.—The people of Laos, our neighbors, admit neither the torture, nor arbitrary punishments, nor the different customs, nor the horrible deaths which are in use among us; but we regard them as barbarians who have no idea of good government. All Asia is agreed that we dance the best of all its inhabitants, and that, consequently, it is impossible they should come near us in jurisprudence, in commerce, in finance, and, above all, in the military art.

DES TOUCHES.—Tell me, I beseech you, by what steps men arrive at the magistracy in Siam.

CROUTEF.—By ready money. You perceive that it may be impossible to be a good judge if a man has not by him thirty or forty thousand pieces of silver. It is in vain a man may be perfectly acquainted with all our customs; it is to no purpose that he has pleaded five hundred causes with success—that he has a mind which is the seat of

judgment, and a heart replete with justice; no man can become a magistrate without money. This, I say, is the circumstance which distinguishes us from all Asia, and particularly from the barbarous inhabitants of Laos, who have the madness to recompense all kinds of talents, and not to sell any employment.

André Des Touches, who was a little off his guard, said to the Siamese that most of the airs which he had just sung sounded discordant to him, and wished to receive information concerning real Siamese music. But Croutef, full of his subject, and enthusiastic for his country, continued in these words:

“What does it signify that our neighbors, who live beyond our mountains, have better music than we have, or better pictures, provided we have always wise and humane laws? It is in that circumstance we excel. For example:

“If a man has adroitly stolen three or four hundred thousand pieces of gold we respect him, and we go and dine with him. But if a poor servant gets awkwardly into his possession three or four pieces of copper out of his mistress’ box we never fail of putting that servant to a public death; first, lest he should not correct himself; secondly, that he may not have it in his power to produce a great number of children for the state, one or two of whom might possibly steal a few little pieces of copper, or become great men; thirdly, because it is just to proportion the punishment to the crime, and that it would be ridiculous to give any useful employment in a prison to a person guilty of so enormous a crime.

“But we are still more just, more merciful, more reasonable in the chastisements which we inflict on those who have the audacity to make use of their legs to go wherever they choose. We treat those warriors so well who sell us their lives, we give them so prodigious a salary, they have so considerable a part in our conquests, that they must be the most criminal of all men to wish to return to their parents on the recovery of their reason, because they had been enlisted in a state of intoxication. To oblige them to remain in one place, we lodge about a dozen leaden balls in their heads, after which they become infinitely useful to their country.

“I will not speak of a great number of excellent institutions which do not go so far as to shed the blood of men, but which render life so pleasant and agreeable that it is impossible the guilty should avoid becoming virtuous. If a farmer has not been able to pay promptly a tax which exceeds his ability, we sell the pot in which he dresses his food; we sell his bed in order that, being relieved of all his superfluities, he may be in a better condition to cultivate the earth.”

DES TOUCHES.—That is extremely harmonious!

CROUTEF.—To comprehend our profound wisdom you must know that our fundamental principle is to acknowledge in many places as our sovereign a shaven-headed foreigner who lives at the distance of nine hundred miles from us. When we assign some of our best territories to any of our talapoins, which it is very prudent in

us to do, that Siamese talapoin must pay the revenue of his first year to that shaven-headed Tartar, without which it is clear our lands would be unfruitful.

But the time, the happy time, is no more when that tonsured priest induced one-half of the nation to cut the throats of the other half in order to decide whether Sammonocodom had played at leap-frog or at some other game; whether he had been disguised in an elephant or in a cow; if he had slept three hundred and ninety days on the right side or on the left. Those grand questions, which so essentially affect morality, agitated all minds; they shook the world; blood flowed plentifully for it; women were massacred on the bodies of their husbands; they dashed out the brains of their little infants on the stones with a devotion, with a grace, with a contrition truly angelic. Woe to us! degenerate offspring of pious ancestors, who never offer such holy sacrifices! But, heaven be praised, there are yet among us at least a few good souls who would imitate them if they were permitted.

DES TOUCHES.—Tell me, I beseech you, sir, if in Siam you divide the tone major into two commas, or into two semi-commas, and if the progress of the fundamental sounds are made by one, three, and nine?

CROUTEF.—By Sammonocodom, you are laughing at me. You observe no bounds. You have interrogated me on the form of our government, and you speak to me of music!

DES TOUCHES.—Music is everything. It was at the foundation of all the politics of the Greeks. But I beg your pardon; you have not a good ear, and we will return to our subject. You said that in order to produce a perfect harmony—

CROUTEF.—I was telling you that formerly the tonsured Tartar pretended to dispose of all the kingdoms of Asia, which occasioned something very different from perfect harmony. But a very considerable benefit resulted from it; for people were then more devout toward Sammonocodom and his elephant than they are now, for, at the present time, all the world pretends to common sense, with an indiscretion truly pitiable. However, all things go on; people divert themselves, they dance, they play, they dine, they sup, they make love; this makes every man shudder who entertains good intentions.

DES TOUCHES.—And what would you have more? You only want good music. If you had good music you might call your nation the happiest in the world.

THE BLIND AS JUDGES OF COLOR

When the hospital of the Quinze Vingt was first founded the pensioners were all equal, and their little affairs were concluded upon by a majority of votes. They distinguished perfectly by the touch between copper and silver coin; they never mistook the wine of Brie for that of Burgundy. Their sense of smell was finer than that of their neighbors who had the use of two eyes. They reasoned very well on the four senses; that is, they knew everything they were permitted to know, and they lived as peaceably and as happily as blind people could be supposed to do. But, unfortunately, one of their professors pretended to have clear ideas in respect to the sense of seeing; he drew attention; he intrigued; he formed enthusiasts, and at last he was acknowledged chief of the community. He pretended to be a judge of colors, and everything was lost.

This dictator of the Quinze Vingt chose at first a little council by the assistance of which he got possession of all the alms. On this account no person had the resolution to oppose him. He decreed that all the inhabitants of the Quinze Vingt were clothed in white. The blind pensioners believed him, and nothing was to be heard but their talk of white garments, though, in fact, they possessed not one of that color. All their acquaintances laughed at them. They made their complaints to the dictator, who received them very ill; he rebuked them as innovators, freethinkers, rebels, who had suffered themselves to be seduced by the errors of those who had eyes, and who presumed to doubt that their chief was infallible. This contention gave rise to two parties.

To appease the tumult, the dictator issued a decree declaring that all their vestments were red. There was not one vestment of that color in the Quinze Vingt. The poor men were laughed at more than ever. Complaints were again made by the community. The dictator rushed furiously in, and the other blind men were as much enraged. They fought a long time, and peace was not restored until the members of the Quinze Vingt were permitted to suspend their judgments in regard to the color of their dress.

A deaf man, reading this little history, allowed that these people, being blind, were to blame in pretending to judge of colors, but he remained steady to his own opinion that those persons who were deaf were the only proper judges of music.

THE CLERGYMAN AND HIS SOUL

CHAPTER I.

There can be no doubt that everything in the world is governed by fatality. My own life is a convincing proof of this doctrine. The earl of Chesterfield, with whom I was a great favorite, had promised me that I should have the first living that fell to his gift. An old incumbent of eighty happened to die, and I immediately travelled post to London to remind the earl of his promise. I was honored with an immediate interview, and was received with the greatest kindness. I informed his lordship of the death of the rector, and of the hope I cherished relative to the disposal of the vacant living. He replied that I really looked very ill. I answered that, thanks to God, my greatest affliction was poverty. “I am sorry for you,” said his lordship, and he politely dismissed me with a letter of introduction to a Mr. Sidrac, who dwelt in the vicinity of Guildhall. I ran as fast as I could to this gentleman’s house, not doubting but that he would immediately install me in the wished-for living. I delivered the earl’s letter, and Mr. Sidrac, who had the honor to be my lord’s surgeon, asked me to sit down, and, producing a case of surgical instruments, began to assure me that he would perform an operation which he trusted would very soon relieve me.

You must know that his lordship had understood that I was suffering from some dreadful complaint, and that he generously intended to have me cured at his own expense. The earl had the misfortune to be as deaf as a post, a fact with which I, alas! had not been previously acquainted.

During the time which I lost in defending myself against the attacks of Mr. Sidrac, who insisted positively upon curing me, whether I would or no, one out of the fifty candidates who were all on the lookout, came to town, flew to my lord, begged the vacant living and obtained it.

I was deeply in love with an interesting girl, a Miss Fidler, who had promised to marry me upon condition of my being made rector. My fortunate rival not only got the living, but also my mistress into the bargain!

My patron, upon being told of his mistake, promised to make me ample amends, but alas! he died two days afterwards.

Mr. Sidrac demonstrated to me that, according to his organic structure, my good patron could not have lived one hour longer. He also clearly proved that the earl’s deafness proceeded entirely from the extreme dryness of the drums of his ears, and kindly offered, by an application of spirits of wine, to harden both of my ears to such a degree that I should, in one month only, become as deaf as any peer of the realm.

I discovered Mr. Sidrac to be a man of profound knowledge. He inspired me with a taste for the study of nature, and I could not but be sensible of the valuable acquisition I had made in acquiring the friendship of a man who was capable of relieving me, should I need his services. Following his advice, I applied myself closely to the study of nature, to console myself for the loss of the rectory and of my enchanting Miss Fidler.

CHAPTER II. THE STUDY OF NATURE.

After making many profound observations upon nature (having employed in the research my five senses, my spectacles, and a very large telescope), I said one day to Mr. Sidrac: “Unless I am much deceived, philosophy laughs at us. I cannot discover any trace of what the world calls nature; on the contrary, everything seems to me to be the result of art. By art the planets are made to revolve around the sun, while the sun revolves on its own axis. I am convinced that some genius has arranged things in such a manner that the square of the revolutions of the planets is always in proportion to the cubic root from their distance to their centre, and one had need be a magician to find out how this is accomplished. The tides of the sea are the result of art no less profound and no less difficult to explain.

“All animals, vegetables, and minerals are arranged with due regard to weight and measure, number and motion. All is performed by springs, levers, pulleys, hydraulic machines, and chemical combinations, from the insignificant flea to the being called man, from the grass of the field to the far-spreading oak, from a grain of sand to a cloud in the firmament of heaven. Assuredly, everything is governed by art, and the word nature is but a chimera.”

“What you say,” answered Mr. Sidrac, “has been said many years ago, and so much the better, for the probability is greater that your remark is true. I am always astonished when I reflect that a grain of wheat cast into the earth will produce in a short time above a handful of the same corn.” “Stop,” said I, foolishly, “you forget that wheat must die before it can spring up again, at least so they say at college.” My friend Sidrac, laughing heartily at this interruption, replied: “That assertion went down very well a few years ago, when it was first published by an apostle called Paul, but in our more enlightened age the meanest laborer knows that the thing is altogether too ridiculous even for argument.”

“My dear friend,” said I, “excuse the absurdity of my remarks; I have hitherto been a theologian, and one cannot divest one’s self in a moment of every silly opinion.”

CHAPTER III. GOOD ADVICE.

Some time after this conversation between the disconsolate person, whom we shall call Goodman, and the clever anatomist, Mr. Sidrac, the latter, one fine morning, observed his friend in St. James’s Park, standing in an attitude of deep thought. “What is the matter?” said the surgeon. “Is there anything amiss?” “No,” replied

Goodman, “but I am left without a patron in the world since the death of my friend, who had the misfortune to be so deaf. Now, supposing there be only ten thousand clergymen in England, and granting these ten thousand have each two patrons, the odds against my obtaining a bishopric are twenty thousand to one; a reflection quite sufficient to give any man the blue-devils. I remember, it was once proposed to me to go out as cabin-boy to the East Indies. I was told that I should make my fortune. But as I did not think I should make a good admiral, whenever I should arrive at the distinction, I declined; and so, after turning my attention to every profession under the sun, I am fixed for life as a poor clergyman, good for nothing.”

“Then be a clergyman no longer!” cried Sidrac, “and turn philosopher. What is your income?” “Only thirty guineas a year,” replied Goodman, “although at the death of my mother it will be increased to fifty.” “Well, my dear Goodman,” continued Sidrac, “that sum is quite sufficient to support you in comfort. Thirty guineas are six hundred and thirty shillings, almost two shillings a day. With this fixed income a man need do nothing to increase it, but is at perfect liberty to say all he thinks of the East India Company, the House of Commons, the king, and all the royal family, of man generally and individually, and lastly, of God and His attributes; and the liberty we enjoy of expressing our thoughts upon these most interesting topics is certainly very agreeable and amusing.”

“Come and dine at my table every day. That will save you some little money. We will afterwards amuse ourselves with conversation, and your thinking faculty will have the pleasure of communicating with mine by means of speech, which is certainly a very wonderful thing, though its advantages are not duly appreciated by the greater part of mankind.”

CHAPTER IV.DIALOGUE UPON THE SOUL AND OTHER TOPICS.

GOODMAN.—But my dear Sidrac, why do you always say *my thinking faculty* and not *my soul*? If you used the latter term I should understand you much better.

SIDRAC.—And for my part, I freely confess I should not understand myself. I *feel*, I *know*, that God has endowed me with the faculties of thinking and speaking, but I can neither *feel* nor *know* that God has given me a thing called a soul.

GOODMAN.—Truly, upon reflection, I perceive that I know as little about the matter as you do, though I own that I have all my life been bold enough to believe that I knew. I have often remarked that the eastern nations apply to the soul the same word they use to express life. After their example, the Latins understood the word *anima* to signify the life of the animal. The Greeks called the breath the soul. The Romans translated the word breath by *spiritus*, and thence it is that the word spirit or soul is found in every modern nation. As it happens that no one has ever seen this spirit or breath, our imagination has converted it into a being which it is impossible to see or touch. The learned tell us that the soul inhabits the body without having any place in it, that it has the power of setting our different organs in motion

without being able to reach and touch them; indeed, what has not been said upon the subject? The great Locke knew into what a chaos these absurdities had plunged the human understanding. In writing the only reasonable book upon metaphysics that has yet appeared in the world, he did not compose a single chapter on the soul, and if by chance he now and then makes use of the word, he only introduces it to stand for intellect or mind.

In fact, every human being, in spite of Bishop Berkeley, is sensible that he has a mind, and that this mind or intellect is capable of receiving ideas; but no one can feel that there is another being—a soul—within him, which gives him motion, feeling, and thought. It is, in fact, ridiculous to use words we do not understand, and to admit the existence of beings of whom we cannot have the slightest knowledge.

SIDRAC.—We are then agreed upon a subject which, for so many centuries, has been a matter of dispute.

GOODMAN.—And I must observe that I am surprised we should have agreed upon it so soon.

SIDRAC.—Oh! that is not so astonishing. We really wish to know what is truth. If we were among the academies we should argue like the characters in Rabelais. If we had lived in those ages of darkness, the clouds of which so long enveloped Great Britain, one of us would very likely have burned the other. We are so fortunate as to be born in an age comparatively reasonable; we easily discover what appears to us to be truth, and we are not afraid to proclaim it.

GOODMAN.—You are right, but I fear that, after all, the truth we have discovered is not worth much. In mathematics, indeed, we have done wonders; from the most simple causes we have produced effects that would have astonished Apollonius or Archimedes; but what have we proved in metaphysics? Absolutely nothing but our own ignorance.

SIDRAC.—And do you call that nothing? You grant the Supreme Being has given you the faculties of feeling and thinking; He has in the same manner given your feet the faculty of walking, your hands their wonderful dexterity, your stomach the capability of digesting food, and your heart the power of throwing arterial blood into all parts of your body. Everything we enjoy is derived from God, and yet we are totally ignorant of the means by which He governs and conducts the universe. For my own part, as Shakespeare says, I thank Him for having taught me that of the principles of things I know absolutely nothing. It has always been a question in what manner the soul acted upon the body. Before attempting to answer this question, I must be convinced that I have a soul. Either God has given us this wonderful spark of intellect, or He has gifted us with some principle that answers equally well. In either case, we are still the creatures of His divine will and goodness, and that is all I know about the matter.

GOODMAN.—But if you do not know, tell me at least what you are inclined to think upon the subject. You have opened skulls, and dissected the human fœtus. Have you ever, in these dissections, discovered any appearance of a soul?

SIDRAC.—Not the least, and I have not been able to understand how an immortal and spiritual essence could dwell for months together in a membrane. It appears to me difficult to conceive that this pretended soul existed before the foundation of the body; for in what could it have been employed during the many ages previous to its mysterious union with flesh? Again! how can we imagine a spiritual principle waiting patiently in idleness during a whole eternity, in order to animate a mass of matter for a space of time which, compared with eternity, is less than a moment?

It is worse still when I am told that God forms immortal souls out of nothing, and then cruelly dooms them to an eternity of flames and torments. What? burn a spirit, in which there can be nothing capable of burning; how can He burn the sound of a voice, or the wind that blows? though both the sound and wind were material during the short time of their existence; but a pure spirit—a thought—a doubt—I am lost in the labyrinth; on whichever side I turn, I find nothing but obscurity and absurdity, impossibility and contradiction. But I am quite at ease when I say to myself God is Master of all. He who can cause each star to hold its particular course through the broad expanse of the firmament can easily give to us sentiments and ideas without the aid of this atom called the soul. It is certain that God has endowed all animals, in a greater or lesser degree, with thought, memory, and judgment; He has given them life; it is demonstrated that they have feeling, since they possess all the organs of feeling; if then they have all this without a soul, why is it improbable that we have none? and why do mankind flatter themselves that they alone are gifted with a spiritual and immortal principle?

GOODMAN.—Perhaps this idea arises from their inordinate vanity. I am persuaded that if the peacock could speak he would boast of his soul, and would affirm that it inhabited his magnificent tail. I am very much inclined to believe with you that God has created us thinking creatures, with the faculties of eating, drinking, feeling, etc., without telling us one word about the matter. We are as ignorant as the peacock I just mentioned, and he who said that we live and die without knowing how, why, or wherefore, spoke nothing but the truth.

SIDRAC.—A celebrated author, whose name I forget, calls us nothing more than the puppets of Providence, and this seems to me to be a very good definition. An infinity of movements are necessary to our existence, but we did not ourselves invent and produce motion. There is a Being who has created light, caused it to move from the sun to our eyes in about seven minutes. It is only by means of motion that my five senses are put in action, and it is only by means of my senses that I have ideas, hence it follows that my ideas are derived from the great author of motion, and when He informs me how He communicates these ideas to me, I will most sincerely thank Him.

GOODMAN.—And so will I. As it is I constantly thank Him for having permitted me, as Epictetus says, to contemplate for a period of some years this beautiful and glorious world. It is true that He could have made me happier by putting me in possession of Miss Fidler and a good rectory, but still, such as I am, I consider myself as under a great obligation to God's parental kindness and care.

Sidrac.—You say that it is in the power of God to give you a good living, and to make you still happier than you are at present. There are many persons who would not scruple flatly to contradict this proposition of yours. Do you forget that you yourself sometimes complain of fatality? A man, and particularly a priest, ought never to contradict one day an assertion he has perhaps made the day before. All is but a succession of links, and God is wiser than to break the eternal chain of events, even for the sake of my dear friend Goodman.

GOODMAN.—I did not foresee this argument when I was speaking of fatality, but to come at once to the point, if it be so, God is as much a slave as myself.

SIDRAC.—He is the slave of His will, of His wisdom, and of the laws which He has Himself instituted; and it is impossible that He can infringe upon any of them, because it is impossible that He can become either weak or inconsistent.

GOODMAN.—But, my friend, what you say would tend to make us irreligious, for, if God cannot change any of the affairs of the world, what is the use of teasing Him with prayers, or of singing hymns to His praise?

SIDRAC.—Well! who bids you worship or pray to God? We praise a man because we think him vain; we entreat of him when we think him weak and likely to change his purpose on account of our petitions. Let us do our duty to God, by being just and true to each other. In that consists our real prayers, and our most heartfelt praises.

A Conversation With A Chinese

In the year 1723 there was a Chinese in Holland who was both a learned man and a merchant, two things that ought by no means to be incompatible; but which, thanks to the profound respect that is shown to money, and the little regard that the human species pay to merit, have become so among us.

This Chinese, who spoke a little Dutch, happened to be in a bookseller's shop at the same time that some literati were assembled there. He asked for a book; they offered him Bossuet's "Universal History," badly translated. At the title "Universal History"—

"How pleased am I," cried the Oriental, "to have met with this book. I shall now see what is said of our great empire, of a nation that has subsisted for upwards of fifty thousand years; of that long dynasty of emperors who have governed us for such a number of ages. I shall see what these Europeans think of the religion of our literati, and of that pure and simple worship we pay to the Supreme Being. What a pleasure will it be for me to find how they speak of our arts, many of which are of a more ancient date with us than the eras of all the kingdoms of Europe! I fancy the author will be greatly mistaken in relation to the war we had about twenty-two thousand five hundred and fifty-two years ago with the martial people of Tonquin and Japan, as well as the solemn embassy that the powerful emperor of Mogul sent to request a body of laws from us in the year of the world 500000000000079123450000."

"Lord bless you," said one of the literati, "there is hardly any mention made of that nation in this world. The only nation considered is that marvellous people, the Jews."

"The Jews!" said the Chinese; "those people then must certainly be masters of three parts of the globe at least."

"They hope to be so some day," answered the other; "but all we have here are those peddlers you see going about with toys and nic-nacs, and who sometimes do us the honor to clip our gold and silver."

"Surely you are not serious," exclaimed the Chinese. "Could those people ever have been in possession of a vast empire?"

Here I joined in the conversation, and told him that for a few years they were in possession of a small country to themselves; but that we were not to judge of a people from the extent of their dominions, any more than of a man by his riches.

"But does not this book take notice of some other nations?" demanded the man of letters.

“Undoubtedly,” replied a learned gentleman who stood at my elbow; “it treats largely of a small country about sixty leagues wide, called Egypt, in which it is said that there is a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference, made by the hands of man.”

“My God!” exclaimed the Chinese, “a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference within a spot of ground only sixty leagues wide. This is very curious!”

“The inhabitants of that country,” continued the doctor, “were all sages.”

“What happy times were those!” cried the Chinese; “but is that all?”

“No,” replied the other, “there is mention made of those famous people the Greeks.”

“Greeks! Greeks!” said the Asiatic, “who are those Greeks?”

“Why,” replied the philosopher, “they were masters of a little province, about the two-hundredth part as large as China, but whose fame spread over the whole world.”

“Indeed!” said the Chinese, with an air of openness and ingenuousness; “I declare I never heard the least mention of these people, either in the Mogul’s country, in Japan, or in Great Tartary.”

“Oh, the barbarian! the ignorant creature!” cried out our sage very politely. “Why, then, I suppose you know nothing of Epaminondas the Theban, nor of the Pierian heaven, nor the names of Achilles’ two horses, nor of Silenus’ ass? You have never heard speak of Jupiter, nor of Diogenes, nor of Lais, nor of Cybele, nor of—”

“I am very much afraid,” said the learned Oriental, interrupting him, “that you know nothing of that eternally memorable adventure of the famous Xixofon Concochigramki, nor of the mysteries of the great Fi-psi-hi-hi! But pray tell me what other unknown things does this “Universal History” treat of?”

Upon this my learned neighbor harangued for a quarter of an hour together about the Roman republic, and when he came to Julius Cæsar the Chinese stopped him, and very gravely said:

“I think I have heard of him; was he not a Turk?”

“How!” cried our sage in a fury, “don’t you so much as know the difference between pagans, Christians, and Mahometans? Did you never hear of Constantine? Do you know nothing of the history of the popes?”

“We have heard something confusedly of one Mahomet,” replied the Asiatic.

“It is surely impossible,” said the other, “but you must have heard at least of Luther, Zwinglius, Bellarmine, and Œcolampadius.”

“I shall never remember all those names,” said the Chinese, and so saying he quitted the shop, and went to sell a large quantity of Pekoe tea and fine calico, and then, after purchasing what merchandise he required, set sail for his own country, adoring Tien, and recommending himself to Confucius.

As to myself, the conversation I had been witness to plainly discovered to me the nature of vain glory; and I could not forbear exclaiming:

“Since Cæsar and Jupiter are names unknown to the finest, most ancient, most extensive, most populous, and most civilized kingdom in the universe, it becomes ye well, O ye rulers of petty states! ye pulpit orators of a narrow parish, or a little town! ye doctors of Salamanca, or of Bourges! ye trifling authors, and ye heavy commentators!—it becomes you well, indeed, to aspire to fame and immortality.”

MEMNON THE PHILOSOPHER

Memnon one day took it into his head to become a great philosopher. “To be perfectly happy,” said he to himself, “I have nothing to do but to divest myself entirely of passions, and nothing is more easy, as everybody knows. In the first place, I will never be in love, for when I see a beautiful woman I will say to myself, These cheeks will one day grow sallow and wrinkled, these eyes be encircled with vermilion, that bosom become lean and emaciated, that head bald and palsied. Now, I have only to consider her at present in imagination as she will afterwards appear in reality, and certainly a fair face will never turn my head.

“In the second place, I shall always be temperate. It will be in vain to tempt me with good cheer, with delicious wines, or the charms of society. I will have only to figure to myself the consequences of excess—an aching head, a loathing stomach, the loss of reason, of health, and of time; I will then only eat to supply the waste of nature; my health will be always equal, my ideas pure and luminous. All this is so easy that there is no merit in accomplishing it.

“But,” says Memnon, “I must think a little of how I am to regulate my fortune; why, my desires are moderate, my wealth is securely placed with the receiver-general of the finances of Nineveh. I have wherewithal to live independent, and that is the greatest of blessings. I shall never be under the cruel necessity of dancing attendance at court. I will never envy any one, and nobody will envy me. Still all this is easy. I have friends, and I will preserve them, for we shall never have any difference. I will never take amiss anything they may say or do; and they will behave in the same way to me. There is no difficulty in all this.”

Having thus laid this little plan of philosophy in his closet, Memnon put his head out of the window. He saw two women walking under the plane trees near his house. The one was old and appeared quite at her ease. The other was young, handsome, and seemingly much agitated. She sighed, she wept, and seemed on that account still more beautiful. Our philosopher was touched, not, to be sure, with the lady (he was too much determined not to feel any uneasiness of that kind), but with the distress which he saw her in. He came downstairs and accosted the young Ninevite, designing to console her with philosophy. That lovely person related to him, with an air of the greatest simplicity and in the most affecting manner, the injuries she sustained from an imaginary uncle—with what art he had deprived her of some imaginary property, and of the violence which she pretended to dread from him.

“You appear to me,” said she, “a man of such wisdom that if you will come to my house and examine into my affairs, I am persuaded you will be able to relieve me from the cruel embarrassment I am at present involved in.”

Memnon did not hesitate to follow her, to examine her affairs philosophically, and to give her sound counsel.

The afflicted lady led him into a perfumed chamber and politely made him sit down with her on a large sofa, where they both placed themselves opposite to each other, in the attitude of conversation, the one eager in telling her story, the other listening with devout attention. The lady spoke with downcast eyes, whence there sometimes fell a tear, and which, as she now and then ventured to raise them, always met those of the sage Memnon. Their discourse was full of tenderness, which redoubled as often as their eyes met. Memnon took her affairs exceedingly to heart and felt himself every instant more and more inclined to oblige a person so virtuous and so unhappy. By degrees, in the warmth of conversation, they drew nearer. Memnon counselled her with great wisdom, and gave her most tender advice.

At this interesting moment, as may easily be imagined, who should come in but the uncle? He was armed from head to foot, and the first thing he said was that he would immediately sacrifice, as was just, both Memnon and his niece. The latter, who made her escape, knew that he was disposed to pardon, provided a good round sum were offered to him. Memnon was obliged to purchase his safety with all he had about him. In those days people were happy in getting so easily quit. America was not then discovered, and distressed ladies were not then so dangerous as they are now.

Memnon, covered with shame and confusion, got home to his own house. He there found a card inviting him to attend dinner with some of his intimate friends.

“If I remain at home alone,” said he, “I shall have my mind so occupied with this vexatious adventure that I shall not be able to eat a bit and I shall bring upon myself some disease. It will, therefore be prudent in me to go to my intimate friends and partake with them of a frugal repast. I shall forget in the sweets of their society the folly I have this morning been guilty of.”

Accordingly he attends the meeting; he is discovered to be uneasy at something, and he is urged to drink and banish care.

“A little wine, drunk in moderation, comforts the heart of God and man”—so reasoned Memnon the philosopher, and he became intoxicated. After the repast, play is proposed.

“A little play with one’s intimate friends is a harmless pastime.” He plays and loses all in his purse and four times as much on his word. A dispute arises on some circumstance in the game and the disputants grow warm. One of his intimate friends throws a dice-box at his head and strikes out one of his eyes. The philosopher Memnon is carried home drunk and penniless, with the loss of an eye.

He sleeps out his debauch and when his head becomes clear he sends his servant to the receiver-general of the finances of Nineveh to draw a little money to pay his debt of honor to his intimate friends. The servant returns and informs him that the

receiver-general had that morning been declared a fraudulent bankrupt, and that by this means a hundred families are reduced to poverty and despair. Memnon, almost beside himself, puts a plaster on his eye and a petition in his pocket, and goes to court to solicit justice from the king against the bankrupt. In the saloon he meets a number of ladies, all in the highest spirits and sailing along with hoops four-and-twenty feet in circumference. One of them, slightly acquainted with him, eyed him askance, and cried aloud: “Ah! what a horrid monster!”

Another, who was better acquainted with him, thus accosts him: “Good-morrow, Mr. Memnon; I hope you are well, Mr. Memnon. La! Mr. Memnon, how did you lose your eye?” and, turning upon her heel, she tripped unconcernedly away.

Memnon hid himself in a corner and waited for the moment when he could throw himself at the feet of the monarch. That moment at last arrived. Three times he kissed the earth and presented his petition. His gracious majesty received him very favorably and referred the paper to one of his satraps. The satrap takes Memnon aside and says to him, with a haughty air and satirical grin:

“Hark ye, you fellow with the one eye; you must be a comical dog indeed to address yourself to the king rather than to me, and still more so to dare to demand justice against an honest bankrupt, whom I honor with my protection, and who is also a nephew to the waiting-maid of my mistress. Proceed no further in this business, my good friend, if you wish to preserve the eye you have left.”

Memnon, having thus in his closet resolved to renounce women, the excess of the table, play, and quarrelling, but especially having determined never to go to court, had been, in the short space of four-and-twenty hours, duped and robbed by a gentle dame, had got drunk, had gamed, had been engaged in a quarrel, had got his eye knocked out, and had been at court, where he was sneered at and also insulted.

Petrified with astonishment, and his heart broken with grief, Memnon returns homeward in despair. As he was about to enter his house, he is repulsed by a number of officers who are carrying off his furniture for the benefit of his creditors. He falls down almost lifeless under a plane tree. There he finds the fair dame of the morning, who was walking with her dear uncle, and both set up a loud laugh on seeing Memnon with his plaster. The night approached, and Memnon made his bed on some straw near the walls of his house. Here the ague seized him and he fell asleep in one of the fits, when a celestial spirit appeared to him in a dream.

It was all resplendent with light; it had six beautiful wings, but neither feet, nor head, and could be likened to nothing.

“What art thou?” said Memnon.

“Thy good genius,” replied the spirit.

“Restore me, then, my eye, my health, my fortune, my reason,” said Memnon, and he related how he had lost them all in one day.

“These are adventures which never happen to us in the world we inhabit,” said the spirit.

“And what world do you inhabit?” said the man of affliction.

“My native country,” replied the other, “is five hundred millions of leagues distant from the sun, in a little star near Sirius.”

“Charming country!” said Memnon. “And are there indeed with you no jades to dupe a poor devil, no intimate friends that win his money and knock out an eye for him, no fraudulent bankrupts, no satraps that make a jest of you while they refuse you justice?”

“No,” said the inhabitant of the star, “we have nothing of the kind. We are never duped by women because we have none among us; we never commit excesses at table because we neither eat nor drink; we have no bankrupts because with us there is neither silver nor gold; our eyes cannot be knocked out because we have not bodies in the form of yours, and satraps never do us injustice, because in our world we are all equal.”

“Pray, my lord,” said Memnon, “without women and without eating, how do you spend your time?”

“In watching over the other worlds that are entrusted to us, and I am now come to give you consolation.”

“Alas!” replied Memnon, “why did you not come yesterday to hinder me from committing so many indiscretions?”

“I was with your elder brother Hassan,” said the celestial being. “He is still more to be pitied than you are. His most gracious majesty, the sultan of the Indies, in whose court he has the honor to serve, has caused both his eyes to be put out for some small indiscretion, and he is now in a dungeon, his hands and feet loaded with chains.”

“Tis a happy thing, truly,” said Memnon, “to have a good genius in one’s family, when out of two brothers, one is blind of an eye, the other blind of both; one stretched upon straw, the other in a dungeon.”

“Your fate will soon change,” said the spirit of the star. “It is true you will never recover your eye, but, except that, you may be sufficiently happy if you never again take it into your head to be a perfect philosopher.”

“Is it, then, impossible?” said Memnon.

“As impossible as to be perfectly wise, perfectly strong, perfectly powerful, perfectly happy. We ourselves are very far from it. There is a world, indeed, where all this takes place; but, in the hundred thousand millions of worlds dispersed over the regions of space, everything goes on by degrees. There is less philosophy and less enjoyment in the second than in the first, less in the third than in the second, and so forth till the last in the scale, where all are completely fools.”

“I am afraid,” said Memnon, “that our little terraqueous globe here is the madhouse of those hundred thousand millions of worlds of which your lordship does me the honor to speak.”

“Not quite,” said the spirit, “but very nearly; everything must be in its proper place.”

“But are those poets and philosophers wrong, then, who tell us that everything is for the best?”

“No, they are right, when we consider things in relation to the gradation of the whole universe.”

“Oh! I shall never believe it till I recover my eye again,” said the unfortunate Memnon.

PLATO'S DREAM

Plato was a great dreamer, as many others have been since his time. He dreamed that mankind were formerly double, and that, as a punishment for their crimes, they were divided into male and female.

He undertook to prove that there can be no more than five perfect worlds, because there are but five regular mathematical bodies. His republic was one of his principal dreams. He dreamed, moreover, that watching arises from sleep, and sleep from watching, and that a person who should attempt to look at an eclipse otherwise than in a pail of water would surely lose his sight. Dreams were at that time in great repute.

Here follows one of his dreams, which is not one of the least interesting. He thought that the great Demiurgos, the eternal geometer, having peopled the immensity of space with innumerable globes, was willing to make a trial of the knowledge of the genii who had been witnesses of his works. He gave to each of them a small portion of matter to arrange, nearly in the same manner as Phidias and Zeuxis would have given their scholars a statue to carve or a picture to paint, if we may be allowed to compare small things to great.

Demogorgon had for his lot the lump of mould which we call the earth, and, having formed it such as it now appears, he thought he had executed a masterpiece. He imagined he had silenced Envy herself, and expected to receive the highest panegyrics, even from his brethren; but how great was his surprise, when, at his next appearing among them, they received him with a general hiss.

One among them, more satirical than the rest, accosted him thus:

"Truly you have performed mighty feats! you have divided your world into two parts; and, to prevent the one from communication with the other, you have carefully placed a vast collection of waters between the two hemispheres. The inhabitants must perish with cold under both your poles and be scorched to death under the equator. You have, in your great prudence, formed immense deserts of sand, so that all who travel over them may die with hunger and thirst. I have no fault to find with your cows, your sheep, your cocks, and your hens, but can never be reconciled to your serpents and your spiders. Your onions and your artichokes are very good things, but I cannot conceive what induced you to scatter such a heap of poisonous plants over the face of the earth, unless it was to poison its inhabitants. Moreover, if I am not mistaken, you have created about thirty different kinds of monkeys, a still greater number of dogs, and only four or five species of the human race. It is true, indeed, you have bestowed on the latter of these animals a faculty by you called reason, but, in truth, this same reason is a very ridiculous thing, and borders very

near upon folly. Besides, you do not seem to have shown any very great regard to this two-legged creature, seeing you have left him with so few means of defence, subjected him to so many disorders and provided him with so few remedies, and formed him with such a multitude of passions and so small a portion of wisdom or prudence to resist them. You certainly were not willing that there should remain any great number of these animals on the earth at once, for, without reckoning the dangers to which you have exposed them, you have so ordered matters that, taking every day throughout the year, smallpox will regularly carry off the tenth part of the species, and sister maladies will taint the springs of life in the nine remaining parts; and then, as if this were not sufficient, you have so disposed things that one-half of those who survive will be occupied in going to law with each other or cutting one another's throats.

"Now, they must doubtless be under infinite obligations to you, and it must be owned you have executed a masterpiece."

Demogorgon blushed. He was sensible there was much moral and physical evil in this affair, but still he insisted there was more good than ill in it.

"It is an easy matter to find fault, good folks," said the genius, "but do you imagine it is so easy to form an animal, who, having the gift of reason and free-will, shall not sometimes abuse his liberty? Do you think that, in rearing between nine and ten thousand different plants, it is so easy to prevent some few from having noxious qualities? Do you suppose that with a certain quantity of water, sand, and mud you could make a globe that should have neither seas nor deserts?

"As for you, my sneering friend, I think you have just finished the planet Jupiter. Let us see now what figure you make with your great belts and your long nights with four moons to enlighten them. Let us examine your worlds and see whether the inhabitants you have made are exempt from follies or diseases."

Accordingly the genius fell to examining the planet Jupiter, when the laugh went strongly against the laugher. The serious genius who had made the planet Saturn did not escape without his share of the censure, and his brother operators, the makers of Mars, Mercury, and Venus, had each in his turn some reproaches to undergo.

Several large volumes and a great number of pamphlets were written on this occasion; smart sayings and witty repartees flew about on all sides; they railed against and ridiculed each other, and, in short, the disputes were carried on with all the warmth of party heat, when the eternal Demiurgos thus imposed silence on them all:

"In your several performances there is both good and bad, because you have a great share of understanding, but at the same time fall short of perfection. Your works will not endure above a hundred millions of years, after which you will acquire more

knowledge and perform much better. It belongs to me alone to create things perfect and immortal.”

This was the doctrine Plato taught his disciples. One of them, when he had finished his harangue, cried out: “And so you then awoke?”

AN ADVENTURE IN INDIA

All the world knows that Pythagoras, while he resided in India, attended the school of the Gymnosophists and learned the language of beasts and plants. One day while he was walking in a meadow near the sea-shore he heard these words:

“How unfortunate that I was born an herb! I scarcely attain two inches in height, when a voracious monster, a horrid animal, tramples me under his large feet; his jaws are armed with rows of sharp scythes, by which he cuts, then grinds, and then swallows me. Men call this monster a sheep. I do not suppose there is in the whole creation a more detestable creature.”

Pythagoras proceeded a little way and found an oyster yawning on a small rock. He had not yet adopted that admirable law by which we are enjoined not to eat those animals which have a resemblance to us. He had scarcely taken up the oyster to swallow it, when it spoke these affecting words:

“O Nature, how happy is the herb, which is, as I am, thy work! Though it be cut down, it is regenerated and immortal, and we, poor oysters, in vain are defended by a double cuirass; villains eat us by dozens at their breakfast, and all is over with us forever. What a horrible fate is that of an oyster, and how barbarous are men!”

Pythagoras shuddered; he felt the enormity of the crime he had nearly committed; he begged pardon of the oyster, with tears in his eyes, and replaced it very carefully on the rock.

As he was returning to the city, profoundly meditating on this adventure, he saw spiders devouring flies; swallows eating spiders, and sparrow-hawks eating swallows. “None of these,” said he, “are philosophers.”

On his entrance, Pythagoras was stunned, bruised, and thrown down by a lot of tatterdemalions, who were running and crying: “Well done, he fully deserved it.” “Who? What?” said Pythagoras, as he was getting up. The people continued running and crying: “Oh, how delightful it will be to see them boiled!”

Pythagoras supposed they meant lentils or some other vegetables, but he was in error; they meant two poor Indians. “Oh!” said Pythagoras, “these Indians, without doubt, are two great philosophers weary of their lives; they are desirous of regenerating under other forms; it affords pleasure to a man to change his place of residence, though he may be but indifferently lodged; there is no disputing on taste.”

He proceeded with the mob to the public square, where he perceived a lighted pile of wood and a bench opposite to it, which was called a tribunal. On this bench judges were seated, each of whom had a cow’s tail in his hand and a cap on his head, with

ears resembling those of the animal which bore Silenus when he came into that country with Bacchus, after having crossed the Erytrean sea without wetting a foot, and stopping the sun and moon, as it is recorded with great fidelity by the Orphics.

Among these judges there was an honest man with whom Pythagoras was acquainted. The Indian sage explained to the sage of Samos the nature of that festival to be given to the people of India.

“These two Indians,” said he, “have not the least desire to be committed to the flames. My grave brethren have adjudged them to be burnt; one for saying that the substance of Xaca is not that of Brahma, and the other for supposing that the approbation of the Supreme Being was to be obtained at the point of death without holding a cow by the tail. ‘Because,’ said he, ‘we may be virtuous at all times, and we cannot always have a cow to lay hold of just when we may have occasion.’ The good women of the city were greatly terrified at two such heretical opinions; they would not allow the judges a moment’s peace until they had ordered the execution of those unfortunate men.”

Pythagoras was convinced that from the herb up to man there were many causes of chagrin. However, he obliged the judges and even the devotees to listen to reason, which happened only at that time.

He went afterwards and preached toleration at Crotona; but a bigot set fire to his house, and he was burned—the man who had delivered the two Hindoos from the flames! Let those save themselves who can!

BABABEC

When I was in the city of Benares, on the borders of the Ganges, the country of the ancient Brahmins, I endeavored to instruct myself in their religion and manners. I understood the Indian language tolerably well. I heard a great deal and remarked everything. I lodged at the house of my correspondent, Omri, who was the most worthy man I ever knew. He was of the religion of the Brahmins; I have the honor to be a Mussulman. We never exchanged one word higher than another about Mahomet or Brahma. We performed our ablutions each on his own side; we drank of the same sherbet, and we ate of the same rice, as if we had been two brothers.

One day we went together to the pagoda of Gavani. There we saw several bands of fakirs, some of whom were janguis, that is to say, contemplative fakirs, and others were disciples of the ancient Gymnosophists, who led an active life. They all have a learned language peculiar to themselves; it is that of the most ancient Brahmins; and they have a book written in this language, which they call the "*Shasta*." It is, beyond all contradiction, the most ancient book in all Asia, not excepting the "*Zend*."

I happened by chance to cross in front of a fakir who was reading in this book.

"Ah! wretched infidel!" cried he, "thou hast made me lose a number of vowels that I was counting, which will cause my soul to pass into the body of a hare instead of that of a parrot, with which I had before the greatest reason to flatter myself."

I gave him a rupee to comfort him for the accident. In going a few paces farther I had the misfortune to sneeze. The noise I made roused a fakir, who was in a trance.

"Heavens!" cried he, "what a dreadful noise. Where am I? I can no longer see the tip of my nose—the heavenly light has disappeared."

"If I am the cause," said I, "of your not seeing farther than the length of your nose, here is a rupee to repair the great injury I have done you. Squint again, my friend, and resume the heavenly light."

Having thus brought myself off discreetly enough, I passed over to the side of the Gymnosophists, several of whom brought me a parcel of mighty pretty nails to drive into my arms and thighs, in honor of Brahma. I bought their nails and made use of them to fasten down my boxes. Others were dancing upon their hands, others cut capers on the slack rope, and others went always upon one foot. There were some who dragged a heavy chain about with them, and others carried a packsaddle; some had their heads always in a bushel—the best people in the world to live with. My friend Omri took me to the cell of one of the most famous of these. His name was Bababec; he was as naked as he was born, and had a great chain about his neck that weighed upwards of sixty pounds. He sat on a wooden chair, very neatly

decorated with little points of nails that penetrated into his flesh, and you would have thought he had been sitting on a velvet cushion. Numbers of women flocked to him to consult him. He was the oracle of all the families in the neighborhood, and was, truly speaking, in great reputation. I was witness to a long conversation that Omri had with him.

“Do you think, father,” said my friend, “that after having gone through seven metempsychoses, I may at length arrive at the habitation of Brahma?”

“That is as it may happen,” said the fakir. “What sort of life do you lead?”

“I endeavor,” answered Omri, “to be a good subject, a good husband, a good father, and a good friend. I lend money without interest to the rich who want it, and I give it to the poor; I always strive to preserve peace among my neighbors.”

“But have you ever run nails into your flesh?” demanded the Brahmin.

“Never, reverend father.”

“I am sorry for it,” replied the father, “very sorry for it, indeed. It is a thousand pities, but you will certainly not reach above the nineteenth heaven.”

“No higher!” said Omri. “In truth, I am very well contented with my lot. What is it to me whether I go into the nineteenth or the twentieth, provided I do my duty in my pilgrimage, and am well received at the end of my journey? Is it not as much as one can desire to live with a fair character in this world and be happy with Brahma in the next? And pray what heaven do you think of going to, good master Bababec, with your chain?”

“Into the thirty-fifth,” said Bababec.

“I admire your modesty,” replied Omri, “to pretend to be better lodged than me. This is surely the result of an excessive ambition. How can you, who condemn others that covet honors in this world, arrogate such distinguished ones to yourself in the next? What right have you to be better treated than me? Know that I bestow more alms to the poor in ten days than the nails you run into your flesh cost for ten years. What is it to Brahma that you pass the whole day stark naked with a chain about your neck? This is doing a notable service to your country, doubtless! I have a thousand times more esteem for the man who sows pulse or plants trees than for all your tribe, who look at the tips of their noses or carry packsaddles to show their magnanimity.”

Having finished this speech, Omri softened his voice, embraced the Brahmin, and, with an endearing sweetness, besought him to throw aside his nails and his chain, to go home with him and live with decency and comfort.

The fakir was persuaded: he was washed clean, rubbed with essences and perfumes and clad in a decent habit; he lived a fortnight in this manner, behaved with prudence and wisdom and acknowledged that he was a thousand times happier than

before; but he lost his credit among the people; the women no longer crowded to consult him; he therefore quitted the house of the friendly Omri and returned to his nails and his chain—to regain his reputation.

ANCIENT FAITH AND FABLE

In order to be successful in their efforts to govern the multitude, rulers have endeavored to instil all the visionary notions possible into the minds of their subjects.

The good people who read Virgil, or the “Provincial Letters,” do not know that there are twenty times more copies of the “Almanac of Liège” and of the “*Courier Boiteux*” printed than of all the ancient and modern books together. No one can have a greater admiration than myself for the illustrious authors of these almanacs and their brethren. I know that ever since the time of the ancient Chaldæans there have been fixed and stated days for taking physic, paring our nails, giving battle, and cleaving wood. I know that the best part of the revenue of an illustrious academy consists in the sale of these almanacs. May I presume to ask, with all possible submission and a becoming diffidence of my own judgment, what harm it would do to the world if some powerful astrologer were to assure the peasants and the good inhabitants of little villages that they might safely pare their nails when they please, provided it be done with a good intention? The people, I shall be told, would not buy the almanacs of this new astrologer. On the contrary, I will venture to affirm that there would be found among your great geniuses many who would make a merit in following this novelty. Should it be alleged, however, that these geniuses, in their new-born zeal, would form factions and kindle a civil war, I would have nothing further to say on the subject, but readily give up for the sake of peace my too radical and dangerous opinion.

Everybody knows the king of Boutan. He is one of the greatest princes in the universe. He tramples under his feet the thrones of the earth, and his shoes (if he has any) are provided with sceptres instead of buckles. He adores the devil, as is well known, and his example is followed by all his courtiers. He one day sent for a famous sculptor of my country and ordered him to make a beautiful statue of Beelzebub. The sculptor succeeded admirably. Never before was there seen such an interesting and handsome devil. But, unhappily, our Praxiteles had only given five clutches to his statue, whereas the devout Boutaniers always gave him six. This serious blunder of the artist was attributed by the grand master of ceremonies to the devil with all the zeal of a man justly jealous of his master’s acknowledged rights, and also of the established and sacred customs of the kingdom of Boutan. He insisted that the sculptor should be punished for his thoughtless innovation, by the loss of his head. The anxious sculptor explained that his five clutches were exactly equal in weight to six ordinary clutches; and the king of Boutan, who was a prince of great clemency, granted him a pardon. From that time the people of Boutan no longer believed the dogma relating to the devil’s six clutches.

The same day it was thought necessary that his majesty should be bled, and a surgeon of Gascony, who had come to his court in a ship belonging to our East India

company, was appointed to take from him five ounces of his precious blood. The astrologer of that quarter cried out that the king would be in danger of losing his life if the surgeon opened a vein while the heavens were in their present state. The Gascon might have told him that the only question was about the king's health; but he prudently waited a few moments, and then, taking an almanac in his hand, thus addressed the astrologer:

"You were in the right, great man! The king would have died had he been bled at the instant you mentioned, but the heavens have since changed their aspect, and now is the favorable moment."

The astrologer assented to the surgeon's observation. The king was cured; and by degrees it became an established custom among the Boutaniers to bleed their kings whenever it was considered necessary.

Although the Indian astrologers understood the method of calculating eclipses, yet the common people obstinately held to the old belief that the sun, when obscured, had fallen into the throat of a great dragon, and that the only way to free him from thence was by standing naked in the water and making a hideous noise to frighten away the monster, and oblige him to release his hold. This notion, which is quite prevalent among the orientals, is an evident proof how much the symbols of religion and natural philosophy have at all times been perverted by the common people. The astronomers of all ages have been wont to distinguish the two points of intersection, upon which every eclipse happens, and which are called the lunar nodes, by marking them with a dragon's head and tail. Now the vulgar, who are equally ignorant in every part of the world, took the symbol or sign for the thing itself. Thus, when the astronomers said the sun is in the dragon's head, the common people said the dragon is going to swallow up the sun; and yet these people were remarkable for their fondness for astrology. But while we laugh at the ignorance and credulity of the Indians, we do not reflect that there are no less than 300,000 almanacs sold yearly in Europe, all of them filled with observations and predictions equally as false and absurd as any to be met with among the Indians. It is surely as reasonable to say that the sun is in the mouth or the claws of a dragon as to tell people every year in print that they must not sow, nor plant, nor take physic, nor be bled, but on certain days of the moon. It is high time, in an age like ours, that some men of learning should think it worth their while to compose a calendar that might be of use to the industrious classes by instructing instead of deceiving them.

A blustering Dominican at Rome said to an English philosopher with whom he was disputing:

"You are a dog; you say that it is the earth that turns round, never reflecting that Joshua made the sun to stand still!"

"Well! my reverend father," replied the philosopher, "ever since that time has not the sun been immovable?"

The dog and the Dominican embraced each other, and even the devout Italians were at length convinced that the earth turns round.

An augur and a senator lamented, in the time of Cæsar, the declining state of the republic.

“The times, indeed, are very bad,” said the senator; “we have reason to tremble for the liberty of Rome.”

“Ah!” said the augur, “that is not the greatest evil; the people now begin to lose the respect which they formerly had for our order. We seem barely to be tolerated—we cease to be necessary. Some generals have the assurance to give battle without consulting us. And, to complete our misfortunes, even those who sell us the sacred pullets begin to reason.”

“Well, and why don’t you reason likewise?” replied the senator, “and since the dealers in pullets in the time of Cæsar are more knowing than they were in the time of Numa, ought not you modern augurs to be better philosophers than those who lived in former ages?”

THE TWO COMFORTERS

The great philosopher Citosile once said to a woman who was disconsolate, and who had good reason to be so: “Madame, the queen of England, daughter to Henry IV., was as wretched as you. She was banished from her kingdom, was in great danger of losing her life at sea, and saw her royal spouse expire on a scaffold.”

“I am sorry for her,” said the lady, and began again to lament her own misfortunes.

“But,” said Citosile, “remember the fate of Mary Stuart. She loved (but with a most chaste and virtuous affection) an excellent musician, who played admirably on the bass-viol. Her husband killed her musician before her face; and in the sequel her good friend and relative, Queen Elizabeth, who called herself a virgin, caused her head to be cut off on a scaffold covered with black, after having confined her in prison for the space of eighteen years.”

“That was very cruel,” replied the lady, and presently relapsed into her former melancholy.

“Perhaps,” said the comforter, “you have heard of the beautiful Joan of Naples, who was taken prisoner and strangled.”

“I have a dim remembrance of her,” said the afflicted lady.

“I must relate to you,” continued the other, “the adventure of a sovereign princess who, within my recollection, was dethroned after supper and who died on a desert island.”

“I know her whole history,” replied the lady.

“Well, then,” said Citosile, “I will tell you what happened to another great princess whom I instructed in philosophy. She had a lover, as all great and beautiful princesses have. Her father surprised this lover in her company, and was so displeased with the young man’s confused manner and excited countenance that he gave him one of the most terrible blows that had ever been given in his province. The lover seized a pair of tongs and broke the head of the angry parent, who was cured with great difficulty, and who still bears the marks of the wound. The lady in a fright leaped out of the window and dislocated her foot, in consequence of which she habitually halts, though still possessed in other respects of a very handsome person. The lover was condemned to death for having broken the head of a great prince. You can imagine in what a deplorable condition the princess must have been when her lover was led to the gallows. I have seen her long ago when she was in prison, and she always spoke to me of her own misfortunes.”

“And why will you not allow me to think of mine?” said the lady.

“Because,” said the philosopher, “you ought not to think of them; and since so many great ladies have been so unfortunate, it ill becomes you to despair. Think of Hecuba—think of Niobe.”

“Ah!” said the lady, “had I lived in their time, or in that of so many beautiful princesses, and had you endeavored to console them by a relation of my misfortunes, would they have listened to you, do you imagine?”

Next day the philosopher lost his only son, and was entirely prostrated with grief. The lady caused a catalogue to be drawn up of all the kings who had lost their children, and carried it to the philosopher. He read it—found it very exact—and wept nevertheless.

Three months afterwards they chanced to renew their acquaintance, and were mutually surprised to find each other in such a gay and sprightly humor. To commemorate this event, they caused to be erected a beautiful statue to Time, with this inscription: “TO HIM WHO COMFORTS.”

A Dialogue Between Marcus Aurelius And A Recollet Friar

MARCUS AURELIUS.—Now I think I begin to know where I am. That's certainly the capitol, and that basilica, the temple. The person I behold there is undoubtedly the priest of Jupiter. Hark ye, friend; one word with you, if you please.

FRIAR.—Friend! very familiar, truly: you must certainly be a stranger in Rome, to accost in this manner brother Fulgentius the recollet, an inhabitant of the capitol, confessor to the duchess de Popoli, and who speaks sometimes to the pope, with as much familiarity as if he were a mere mortal.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—Brother Fulgentius in the capitol! Matters are somewhat changed indeed. I don't understand one word you say. Is there no such place here as the temple of Jupiter?

FRIAR.—Get you gone about your business, honest friend; you seem to be out of your senses. Who are you, prithee, with your antique dress and your Jew's beard? Whence come you, and what do you want here?

MARCUS AURELIUS.—This is my ordinary apparel: I am come back to see Rome once more. My name is Marcus Aurelius.

FRIAR.—Marcus Aurelius! I think I remember to have heard of such a name. If I don't mistake, there was a Pagan emperor so called.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—I am he. I longed to have another view of that Rome which I loved, and which was so fond of me; that capitol in which I triumphed by my contempt of triumph; that land I formerly rendered so happy: but now I can hardly think it to be the same place. I have been to see the column that was erected to my honor, and have not been able to find the statue of the sage Antonine, my father. The face is quite altered from what it was.

FRIAR.—So it ought, M. Damned Soul. Sixtus V. erected that column; but then he put on it a better man than you and your father to boot.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—I was always of opinion it was no difficult matter to excel me; but I thought it no such easy affair to surpass my father. Perhaps my piety towards him has imposed on my judgment. All men are liable to error. But why give me the epithet of Damned Soul?

FRIAR.—Because so you are. Was it not you—let me see, I don't mistake—that so often persecuted a set of folks, to whom you lay under very great obligations, and who procured you a shower of rain which enabled you to thrash your enemies?

MARCUS AURELIUS.—Alas! I was very far from persecuting any one. I thank Heaven, by a very happy conjuncture, a storm happened, just in the nick of time, to save my troops, who were dying of thirst; but I never heard before that I owed the favor of this tempest to the folks you mention, though, to tell you the truth, they were very good soldiers. I assure you, in the most solemn manner, I am not damned: I have done too much good to mankind, that the Divine Being should do me any evil. But, prithee tell me, where is the palace of the emperor, my successor? Is it still on the Palatine hill? For really I hardly know my own country again.

FRIAR.—I believe it, truly, we have so improved everything. If you please, I will carry you to Monte Cavallo: you shall have the honor to kiss the great toe of St. Peter; and you will, besides, receive a handsome present of indulgences, which, in my humble opinion, will be very seasonable; for I don't doubt you stand in great need of them.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—First of all, I desire you would grant me your own; and tell me ingenuously, is there an end of the emperors and empire of Rome?

FRIAR.—No, no, by no means; there is still an empire and an emperor; but then he keeps his court at the distance of about four hundred leagues hence, at a small city called Vienna, on the Danube. My advice is, that you go there to pay a visit to your successors; because here you stand a great chance to visit the inquisition. I warn you that the reverend Dominican fathers are not at all disposed to jest in such matters, and that your Marcus Aureliuses, your Antonines, your Trajans, and your Tituses, and such gentry as cannot say their catechism, are treated by them after a very scurvy manner.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—The catechism! the inquisition! Dominicans! Recollets! a pope and cardinals! and the Roman Empire in a little city on the Danube! I could never have dreamt of such things; though I will allow, that in sixteen hundred years things will change strangely in this world of ours. I could like, methinks, to see one of these Roman emperors, Marcoman, Quadus, Cimber, and Teuto.

FRIAR.—You shall not want that pleasure when you please, and a greater than that still. You would, in all likelihood, be surprised, were I to tell you that the Scythians hold one half of your empire, and we the other: that the sovereign of Rome is a priest like me: that brother Fulgentius may be that sovereign in his turn: that I shall disperse indulgences on the very spot where you were wont to be drawn in your car by vanquished sovereigns: and, lastly, that your successor on the Danube has not a city he can call his own; but that there is a certain priest that lets him have the use of his capital, when he has occasion for it.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—You tell me strange news, indeed. All these great changes could never have happened without great misfortunes. I own I still love the human race, and am heartily sorry for them.

FRIAR.—You are too good. These revolutions have really cost a deluge of blood, and a hundred provinces have been ravaged; but had it not been so, your servant, brother Fulgentius, had never slept at his ease in the capitol.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—Rome, that metropolis of the universe, is then most miserably fallen.

FRIAR.—Fallen, I grant you; but as for miserably, there I must say you nay: on the contrary, peace and the fine arts flourish here eternally. The ancient masters of the world are now become music-masters. Instead of sending colonies into England, we now send them eunuchs and fiddlers. We have, it is true, none of your Scipios now, those destroyers of Carthage; but then we have none of your proscriptions neither. We have bartered glory for tranquillity.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—I tried what I could to become a philosopher in my life-time, but now I am sure I have become one indeed. I find tranquillity is at the least an equivalent for glory: but, by what you tell me, I should be apt to suspect brother Fulgentius is no adept in philosophy.

FRIAR.—What do you mean? Not a philosopher! I am one with a vengeance. I once taught philosophy; nay, better still, I read lectures in theology.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—And, pray, what may this theology of yours be, an’t please you?

FRIAR.—Why, it is—it is that which has made me be here, and the emperor elsewhere. You seem to grudge me the honor I enjoy, and are out of humor at the trifling revolution that has happened to your empire.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—I adore the eternal decrees of Providence: I know man ought not to repine at fate: I admire the vicissitude of human affairs; but since everything is so liable to change, and since the Roman Empire has experienced this wonderful mutability, let me hope the recollets may also experience it in their turn.

FRIAR.—I declare you anathematized: but hold, now I think on’t, it is time to go to matins.

MARCUS AURELIUS.—And I will go and be reunited to the Being of Beings.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BRAHMIN AND A JESUIT, ON NECESSITY AND FREE-WILL, AND THE GENERAL CONCATENATION OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS

JESUIT.—In all probability, you are indebted to the prayers of St. Francis Xavier for that long and happy life you have enjoyed a hundred and fourscore years! Why, 'tis a life-time for a patriarch.

BRAHMIN.—My master, Fonfouca, lived till three hundred; it is the ordinary course of life among us Brahmins. I have a very great regard for Francis Xavier; but all his prayers would never have put nature out of her destined order: had he really been able to prolong the life of a gnat but for one single instant beyond what the general concatenation of causes and events allows of, this globe of ours had worn a quite different appearance from that in which you now behold it.

JESUIT.—You have a strange opinion of future contingents: why, you must be entirely ignorant that man is free, and that our free-will disposes of everything in this sublunary world at its mere fancy and pleasure. I can assure you the Jesuits alone have contributed not a little to some very considerable revolutions.

BRAHMIN.—I have no manner of question in regard to the learning and power of the reverend fathers, the Jesuits: they are a very valuable part of human society; yet I cannot by any means believe them the sovereign arbiters of human transactions: every single person, every single being, whether Jesuit or Brahmin, is one of the springs which act in the general movement of the universe; in which he is the slave, and not the master of destiny. Pray, to what do you think Genghis Khan owed the conquest of Asia? To the very moment in which his father one day happened to awake as he was in bed with his wife; to a word which a Tartar chanced to let fall some years before. I, for example, the very person you behold, am one of the chief causes of the deplorable death of Henry IV., for which, you may see, I am still much afflicted.

JESUIT.—Your reverence is pleased to be very merry upon the matter? You the cause of the death of Henry IV.!

BRAHMIN.—Alas! it is too true. This happened in the nine hundred and eighty-three thousandth year of the revolution of Saturn, which makes the fifteen hundred and fiftieth of your era. I was then young and giddy headed. I thought proper, upon a time, to take a walk, which I began with moving my left foot first, on the coast of Malabar, whence most evidently followed the death of Henry IV.

JESUIT.—How so, prithee? For, as to our society, who were accused with having had a large share in that affair, we had not the least knowledge of it.

BRAHMIN.—I'll tell ye how fate thought proper to order the matter. By moving my left foot, as I told you, I unluckily tumbled my friend Eriban, the Persian merchant, into the water, and he was drowned. My friend, it seems, had a very handsome wife, that ran away with an Armenian merchant: this lady had a daughter, who married a Greek; the daughter of this Greek settled in France, and married the father of Ravaillac. Now, had not every tittle of this happened exactly as it did, you are very sensible the affairs of the houses of France and Austria would have turned out in a very different manner. The system of Europe would have been entirely changed. The wars between Turkey and the German Empire would have had quite another issue; which issue would have had an effect on Persia, as well as Persia on the East Indies; so you see it is plain to a demonstration, that the whole depended on my left foot, which was connected with all the other events of the universe, past, present, and to come.

JESUIT.—I must have this affair laid before some of our fathers, who are theologians.

BRAHMIN.—In the meantime, I will tell you, father, that the maid-servant of the grandfather of the founder of the *Feuillants*—for you must know I have dipped into your histories—was likewise one principal cause of the death of Henry IV., and of all the accidents which it produced.

JESUIT.—This servant-maid must then have been a domineering quean!

BRAHMIN.—Oh fie! no such thing. She was a mere idiot, by whom her master had a child. Madame de la Barrière, poor soul, died of grief at it. She who succeeded her was, as your chronicles tell, the grandmother of the blessed John de la Barrière, who founded the order of *Feuillants*. Ravaillac was a monk of this order. With them he sucked in a certain doctrine very fashionable in those days, as you well enough know. This doctrine taught him to believe that the most meritorious thing he could possibly do was to assassinate the best king in the whole world. What followed is known to everybody.

JESUIT.—In spite of your left foot, and the wench of the grandfather of the founder of the *Feuillants*, I shall ever be of opinion that the horrible action committed by Ravaillac was a future contingent, which might very well not have happened: for, after all, man is certainly a free agent.

BRAHMIN.—I do not know what you mean by a free agent. I can affix no certain idea to these words. To be free, is to do whatever we think proper, and not to will whatever we please. All I know of the matter is, that Ravaillac voluntarily committed the crime, of which he was destined by fate to be the instrument. This crime was no more than a link of the great chain of destiny.

JESUIT.—You may say what you will, but the affairs of this world are far from having any such dependence as you are pleased to think. What signifies, for example, this useless conversation of ours, here on the shores of the East Indies?

BRAHMIN.—What you and I say in conversation is doubtless sufficiently insignificant; but, for all that, were you not here, the machine of the universe would be extremely changed from what it is.

JESUIT.—There your Brahmin reverence is pleased to advance a huge paradox truly.

BRAHMIN.—Your Ignatian fathership may believe me or no, as you like it. But assuredly, we should never have had this conversation together, had you not come into the East Indies. You had never made this voyage, had not your St. Ignatius de Loyola been wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, or had not the king of Portugal persisted in discovering the passage round the Cape of Good Hope. Now, prithee, did not the king of Portugal, with the help of the compass, entirely change the face of this world of ours? But it was first of all necessary that a certain Neapolitan should make this discovery of the compass; now tell me, if you have the face, that everything is not wholly subservient to one constant and uniform tenor of action; which by indissoluble, but invisible, concatenation, unites all that lives, or acts, or dies, or suffers on the surface of our globe?

JESUIT.—What then would become of our future contingents?

BRAHMIN.—What care I what become of them? but yet the order established by the hand of an eternal and almighty God must certainly exist forever.

JESUIT.—Were one to listen to you, we ought not to pray to God at all.

BRAHMIN.—It is our duty to adore Him. But pray what mean ye by praying to God?

JESUIT.—What all the world means by it, to be sure: that He would grant our petitions, and favor us in all our wants.

BRAHMIN.—I understand you. You mean, that a gardener might obtain clear sunshine weather, at a time which God had ordained from all eternity to produce rains; and that a pilot should have an easterly wind, when a westerly wind ought to refresh the earth, as well as the seas? My good father, to pray as we ought is to submit one’s self wholly to Providence. So good evening to you. Destiny requires I should now visit my Brahminess.

JESUIT.—And my free-will urges me to give a lesson to a young scholar.

DIALOGUES BETWEEN LUCRETIUS AND POSIDONIUS

FIRST COLLOQUY.

POSIDONIUS.—Your poetry is sometimes admirable; but the philosophy of Epicurus is, in my opinion, very bad.

LUCRETIUS.—What! will you not allow that the atoms, of their own accord, disposed themselves in such a manner as to produce the universe?

POSIDONIUS.—We mathematicians can admit nothing but what is proved by incontestable principles.

LUCRETIUS.—My principles are so.

Ex nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti.

Tangere enim & tangi nisi corpus nulla potest res.

From nothing nought can spring, to nothing nought return.

Nought but a body can a body touch.

POSIDONIUS.—Should I grant you these principles, and even your atoms and your vacuum, you can no more persuade me that the universe put itself into the admirable order in which we now behold it, than if you were to tell the Romans that the armillary sphere composed by Posidonius made itself.

LUCRETIUS.—But who then could make the world?

POSIDONIUS.—An intelligent Being, much more superior to the world and to me than I am to the brass of which I made my sphere.

LUCRETIUS.—How can you, who admit nothing but what is evident, acknowledge a principle of which you have not the least idea?

POSIDONIUS.—In the same manner as, before I knew you, I judged that your book was the work of a man of genius.

LUCRETIUS.—You allow that nature is eternal, and exists because it does exist. Now if it exists by its own power, why may it not, by the same power, have formed suns, and worlds, and plants, and animals, and men?

POSIDONIUS.—All the ancient philosophers have supposed matter to be eternal, but have never proved it to be really so; and even allowing it to be eternal, it would by no means follow that it could form works in which there are so many striking

proofs of wisdom and design. Suppose this stone to be eternal if you will, you can never persuade me that it could have composed the “Iliad” of Homer.

LUCRETIUS.—No: a stone could never have composed the “Iliad,” any more than it could have produced a horse: but matter organized in process of time, and become bones, flesh, and blood, will produce a horse; and organized more finely, will produce the “Iliad.”

POSIDONIUS.—You suppose all this without any proof; and I ought to admit nothing without proof. I will give you bones, flesh, and blood, ready made, and will leave you and all the Epicureans in the world to make your best of them. Will you only consent to this alternative: to be put in possession of the whole Roman Empire, if, with all the ingredients ready prepared, you produce a horse, and to be hanged if you fail in the attempt?

LUCRETIUS.—No; that surpasses my power, but not the power of nature. It requires millions of ages for nature, after having passed through all the possible forms, to arrive at last at the only one which can produce living beings.

POSIDONIUS.—You might, if you pleased, continue all your lifetime to shake in a cask all the materials of the earth mixed together, you would never be able to form any regular figure; you could produce nothing. If the length of your life is not sufficient to produce even a mushroom, will the length of another man’s life be sufficient for that purpose? Why should several ages be able to effect what one age has not effected? One ought to have seen men and animals spring from the bosom of the earth, and corn produced without seed, etc., before he should venture to affirm that matter, by its own energy, could give itself such forms; but no one that I know of has seen such an operation, and therefore no one ought to believe it.

LUCRETIUS.—Well! men, animals, and trees must always have existed. All the philosophers allow that matter is eternal; and they must further allow, that generations are so likewise. It is the very nature of matter that there should be stars that revolve, birds that fly, horses that run, and men that compose “Iliads.”

POSIDONIUS.—In this new supposition you change your opinion; but you always suppose the point in question, and admit a thing for which you have not the least proof.

LUCRETIUS.—I am at liberty to believe that what is to-day was yesterday, was a century ago, was a hundred centuries ago, and so on backwards without end. I make use of your argument: no one has ever seen the sun and stars begin their course, nor the first animals formed and endowed with life. We may, therefore, safely believe that all things were from eternity as they are at present.

POSIDONIUS.—There is a very great difference. I see an admirable design, and I ought to believe that an intelligent being formed that design.

LUCRETIUS.—You ought not to admit a being of whom you have no knowledge.

POSIDONIUS.—You might as well tell me that I should not believe that an architect built the capitol because I never saw that architect.

LUCRETIUS.—Your comparison is not just. You have seen houses built, and you have seen architects; and therefore you ought to conclude that it was a man like our present architects that built the capitol. But here the case is very different: the capitol does not exist of itself, but matter does. It must necessarily have had some form; and why will you not allow it to possess, by its own energy, the form in which it now is? Is it not much easier for you to admit that nature modifies itself, than to acknowledge a being that modifies it? In the former case you have only one difficulty to encounter, namely, to comprehend how nature acts. In the latter you have two difficulties to surmount: to comprehend this same nature, and the visible being that acts on it.

POSIDONIUS.—It is quite the reverse. I see not only a difficulty, but even an impossibility in comprehending how matter can have infinite designs; but I see no difficulty in admitting an intelligent being, who governs this matter by his infinite wisdom, and by his almighty will.

LUCRETIUS.—What? is it because your mind cannot comprehend one thing that you are to suppose another? Is it because you do not understand the secret springs, and admirable contrivances, by which nature disposed itself into planets, suns, and animals, that you have recourse to another being?

POSIDONIUS.—No; I have not recourse to a god, because I cannot comprehend nature; but I plainly perceive that nature needs a supreme intelligence; and this reason alone would to me be a sufficient proof of a deity had I no other.

LUCRETIUS.—And what if this matter possessed intelligence of itself?

POSIDONIUS.—It is plain to me that it does not possess it.

LUCRETIUS.—And to me it is plain that it does possess it, since I see bodies like you and me reason.

POSIDONIUS.—If matter possesses, of itself, the faculty of thinking, you must affirm that it possesses it necessarily and independently: but if this property be essential to matter, it must have it at all times and in all places; for whatever is essential to a thing can never be separated from it. A bit of clay, and even the vilest excrement would think; but sure you will not say that dung thinks. Thought, therefore, is not an essential attribute of matter.

LUCRETIUS.—Your reasoning is a mere sophism. I hold motion to be essential to matter; and yet this dung, or that piece of clay, is not actually in motion; but they will be so when they are impelled by some other body. In like manner thought will not be an attribute of a body, except when that body is organized for thinking.

POSIDONIUS.—Your error proceeds from this, that you always suppose the point in question. You do not reflect that, in order to organize a body, to make it a man, to render it a thinking being, there must previously be thought, there must be a fixed design. But you cannot admit such a thing as design before the only beings in this world capable of design are formed; you cannot admit thought before the only beings capable of thinking exist. You likewise suppose the point in question, when you say that motion is necessary to matter; for what is absolutely necessary always exists, as extension, for instance, exists always and in every part of matter; but motion does not exist always. The pyramids of Egypt are not surely in motion. A subtile matter perhaps, may penetrate between the stones which compose the pyramids; but the body of the pyramid is immovable. Motion, therefore, is not essential to matter, but is communicated to it by a foreign cause, in the same manner as thought is to men. Hence it follows that there must be a powerful and intelligent being, who communicates motion, life, and thought to his creatures.

LUCRETIUS.—I can easily answer your objections by saying that there have always been motion and intelligence in the world. This motion and this intelligence have been distributed at all times according to the laws of nature. Matter being eternal, it must necessarily have been in some order; but it could not be put into any order without thought and motion; and therefore thought and motion must have always been inherent in it.

POSIDONIUS.—Do what you will, you can at best but make suppositions. You suppose an order; there must, therefore, have been some intelligent mind who formed this order. You suppose motion and thought before matter was in motion, and before there were men and thoughts. You must allow, that thought is not essential to matter, since you dare not say that a flint thinks. You can oppose nothing but a *perhaps* to the truth that presses hard upon you. You are sensible of the weakness of matter, and are forced to admit a supreme intelligent and almighty being, who organized matter and thinking beings. The designs of this superior intelligence shine forth in every part of nature, and you must perceive them as distinctly in a blade of grass, as in the course of the stars. Everything is evidently directed to a certain end.

LUCRETIUS.—But do you not take for a design what is only a necessary existence? Do you not take for an end what is no more than the use which we make of things that exist? The Argonauts built a ship to sail to Colchis. Will you say that the trees were created in order that the Argonauts might build a ship, and that the sea was made to enable them to undertake their voyage? Men wear stockings: will you say that legs were made by the Supreme Being in order to be covered with stockings? No, doubtless; but the Argonauts, having seen wood, built a ship with it, and having learned that the water could carry a ship, they undertook their voyage. In the same manner, after an infinite number of forms and combinations which matter had assumed, it was found that the humors, and the transparent horn which compose the eye, and which were formerly separated in different parts of the body, were united in

the head, and animals began to see. The organs of generation, dispersed before, were likewise collected, and took the form they now have; and then all kinds of procreation were conducted with regularity. The matter of the sun, which had been long diffused and scattered through the universe, was conglobated, and formed the luminary that enlightens our world. Is there anything impossible in all this?

POSIDONIUS.—In fact, you cannot surely be serious when you have recourse to such a system: for, in the first place, if you adopt this hypothesis, you must, of course, reject the eternal generations of which you have just now been talking: and, in the second place, you are mistaken with regard to final causes. There are voluntary uses to which we apply the gifts of nature; and there are likewise necessary effects. The Argonauts need not, unless they had pleased, have employed the trees of the forest to build a ship; but these trees were plainly destined to grow on the earth, and to produce fruits and leaves. We need not cover our legs with stockings; but the leg was evidently made to support the body, and to walk, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the parts of generation to perpetuate the species. If you consider that a star, placed at the distance of four or five hundred millions of leagues from us, sends forth rays of light, which make precisely the same angle in the eyes of every animal, and that, at that instant, all animals have the sensation of light, you must acknowledge that this is an instance of the most admirable mechanism and design. But is it not unreasonable to admit mechanism without a mechanic, a design without intelligence, and such designs without a Supreme Being?

LUCRETIUS.—If I admit the Supreme Being, what form must I give Him? Is He in one place? Is He out of all place? Is He in time or out of time? Does He fill the whole of space, or does He not fill it? Why did He make the world? What was His end in making it? Why form sensible and unhappy beings? Why moral and natural evil? On whatever side I turn my mind, everything appears dark and incomprehensible.

POSIDONIUS.—'Tis a necessary consequence of the existence of this Supreme Being that His nature should be incomprehensible; for, if He exists, there must be an infinite distance between Him and us. We ought to believe that He is, without endeavoring to know what He is, or how He operates. Are you not obliged to admit asymptotes in geometry, without comprehending how it is possible for the same lines to be always approaching, and yet never to meet? Are there not many things as incomprehensible as demonstrable, in the properties of the circle? Confess, therefore, that you ought to admit what is incomprehensible, when the existence of that incomprehensible is proved.

LUCRETIUS.—What! must I renounce the dogmas of Epicurus?

POSIDONIUS.—It is better to renounce Epicurus than to abandon the dictates of reason.

SECOND COLLOQUY.

LUCRETIUS.—I begin to recognize a Supreme Being, inaccessible to our senses, and proved by our reason, who made the world, and preserves it; but with regard to what I have said of the soul, in my third book, which has been so much admired by all the learned men of Rome, I hardly think you can oblige me to alter my opinion.

POSIDONIUS.—You say: "*Idque situm media regione in pectoris hæret.*"—"The mind is in the middle of the breast."—But, when you composed your beautiful verses, did you never make any effort of the head? When you speak of the orators Cicero and Mark Antony, do you not say that they had good heads? And were you to say that they had good breasts, would not people imagine that you were talking of their voice and lungs?

LUCRETIUS.—Are you not convinced, from experience, that the feelings of joy, of sorrow, and of fear, are formed about the heart?

Hic exultat enim pavor ac metus; hæc loca circum

Lætitiæ mulcent.

For there our passions live, our joy, our fear,

And hope.

Do you not feel your heart dilate or contract itself on the hearing of good or bad news? Is it not possessed of some secret springs of a yielding and elastic quality? This, therefore, must be the seat of the soul.

POSIDONIUS.—There are two nerves which proceed from the brain, pass through the heart and stomach, reach to the parts of generation, and communicate motion to them; but would you therefore say, that the human mind resides in the parts of generation?

LUCRETIUS.—No; I dare not say so. But though I should place the soul in the head, instead of placing it in the breast, my principles will still subsist: the soul will still be an infinitely subtile matter, resembling the elementary fire that animates the whole machine.

POSIDONIUS.—And why do you imagine that a subtile matter can have thoughts and sentiments of itself?

LUCRETIUS.—Because I experience it; because all the parts of my body, when touched, presently feel the impression; because this feeling is diffused through my whole machine; because it could not be diffused through it but by a matter of a very subtile nature, and of a very rapid motion; because I am a body, and one body cannot be affected but by another; because the interior part of my body could not be penetrated but by very small corpuscles; and, in consequence, my soul must be an assemblage of these corpuscles.

POSIDONIUS.—We have already agreed, in our first colloquy, that it is extremely improbable that a rock could compose the “Iliad.” Will a ray of the sun be more capable of composing it? Suppose this ray a hundred thousand times more subtile and rapid than usual, will this light, or this tenuity of parts, produce thoughts and sentiments?

LUCRETIUS.—Perhaps it may, when placed in organs properly prepared.

POSIDONIUS.—You are perpetually reduced to your *perhaps*. Fire, of itself, is no more capable of thinking than ice. Should I suppose that it is fire that thinks, perceives, and wills in you, you would then be forced to acknowledge that it is not by its own virtue that it has either will, thought, or perception.

LUCRETIUS.—No; these sensations will be produced not by its own virtue, but by the assemblage of the fire, and of my organs.

POSIDONIUS.—How can you imagine that two bodies, neither of which can think apart, should be able to produce thought, when joined together?

LUCRETIUS.—In the same manner as a tree and earth, when taken separately, do not produce fruit, but do so when the tree is planted in the earth.

POSIDONIUS.—The comparison is only specious. This tree has in it the seeds of fruit: we plainly perceive them in the buds, and the moisture of the earth unfolds the substance of these fruits. Fire, therefore, must possess in itself the seeds of thought, and the organs of the body serve only to develop these seeds.

LUCRETIUS.—And do you find anything impossible in this?

POSIDONIUS.—I find that this fire, this highly refined matter, is as devoid of the faculty of thinking as a stone. The production of a being must have something similar to that which produced it; but thought, will, and perception have nothing similar to fiery matter.

LUCRETIUS.—Two bodies, struck against each other, produce motion, and yet this motion has nothing similar to the two bodies; it has none of their three dimensions, nor has it any figure. A being, therefore, may have nothing similar to that which produced it, and, in consequence, thought may spring from an assemblage of two bodies which have no thought.

POSIDONIUS.—This comparison likewise is more specious than just. I see nothing but matter in two bodies in motion: I only see bodies passing from one place to another. But when we reason together I see no matter in your ideas, or in my own. I shall only observe that I can no more conceive how one body has the power of moving another, than I can comprehend the manner of my having ideas. To me both are equally inexplicable, and both equally prove the existence and the power of a Supreme Being, the author of thought and motion.

LUCRETIUS.—If our soul is not a subtile fire, an ethereal quintessence, what is it?

POSIDONIUS.—Neither you nor I know aught of the matter. I will tell you plainly what it is not; but I cannot tell you what it actually is. I see that it is a power lodged in my body; that I did not give myself this power; and, in consequence, that it must have come from a Being superior to myself.

LUCRETIUS.—You did not give yourself life; you received it from your father; from whom, likewise, together with life, you received the faculty of thinking, as he had received both from his father, and so on backwards to infinity. You no more know the true principle of life than you do that of thought. This succession of living and thinking beings has always existed.

POSIDONIUS.—I plainly see that you are always obliged to abandon the system of Epicurus, and that you dare no longer maintain that the declination of atoms produced thought. I have already, in our last colloquy, refuted the eternal succession of sensible and thinking beings. I showed you that, if there are material beings capable of thinking by their own power, thought must necessarily be an attribute essential to all matter; that, if matter thought necessarily, and by its own virtue, all matter must of course think: but this is not the case, and therefore it is impossible to maintain a succession of material beings, who, of themselves, possess the faculty of thinking.

LUCRETIUS.—Notwithstanding this reasoning, which you repeat, it is certain that a father communicates a soul to his son at the same time that he forms his body. This soul and this body grow together; they gradually acquire strength; they are subject to calamities, and to the infirmities of old age. The decay of our strength draws along with it that of our judgment; the effect at last ceases with the cause, and the soul vanishes like smoke into air.

Præterea, gigni pariter cum corpore, & una

Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.

Nam velet infirmo pueri, teneroque vagantur

Corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenuis.

Inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus ætas,

Consilium quoque majus, & auctior est animi vis.

Post ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi

Corpus, & obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus:

Claudicat ingenium delirat linguaque, mensque;

Omnia deficiunt, atque uno tempore desunt,

Ergo dissolvi quoque convenit omnem animai

Naturam, ceu fumus in altas aeris auras:

Quandoquidem gigni pariter, pariterque videmus

Crescere, & (ut docui) simul ævo fessa fatiscit.

Besides, 'tis plain that souls are born, and grow;

And all by age decay, as bodies do;

To prove this truth: in infants, minds appear

Infirm, and tender as their bodies are:

In man, the mind is strong; when age prevails,

And the quick vigor of each member fails,

The mind's powers, too, decrease, and waste apace;

And grave and reverend folly takes the place.

'Tis likely then the soul and mind must die;

Like smoke in air, its scattered atoms fly;

Since all these proofs have shown, these reasons told,

'Tis with the body born, grows strong, and old.

—CREECH.

POSIDONIUS.—These, to be sure, are very fine verses; but do you thereby inform me of the nature of the soul?

LUCRETIUS.—No; I only give you its history, and I reason with probability.

POSIDONIUS.—Where is the probability of a father's communicating to his son the faculty of thinking?

LUCRETIUS.—Do you not daily see children resembling their fathers in their inclinations, as well as in their features?

POSIDONIUS.—But does not a father, in begetting his son, act as a blind agent? Does he pretend, when he enjoys his wife, to make a soul, or to make thoughts? Do either of them know the manner in which a child is formed in the mother's womb? Must we not, in this case, have recourse to a superior cause, as well as in all the other operations of nature which we have examined? Must you not see, if you are in

earnest, that men give themselves nothing, but are under the hand of an absolute master?

LUCRETIUS.—If you know more of the matter than I do, tell me what the soul is.

POSIDONIUS.—I do not pretend to know what it is more than you. Let us endeavor to enlighten each other. Tell me, first, what is vegetation.

LUCRETIUS.—It is an internal motion, that carries the moisture of the earth into plants, makes them grow, unfolds their fruits, expands their leaves, etc.

POSIDONIUS.—Surely you do not think that there is a being called *Vegetation* that performs these wonders?

LUCRETIUS.—Who ever thought so?

POSIDONIUS.—From our former colloquy you ought to conclude that the tree did not give vegetation to itself.

LUCRETIUS.—I am forced to allow it.

POSIDONIUS.—Tell me next what life is.

LUCRETIUS.—It is vegetation joined with perception in an organized body.

POSIDONIUS.—And is there not a being called life, that gives perception to an organized body?

LUCRETIUS.—Doubtless vegetation and life are words which signify things that live and vegetate.

POSIDONIUS.—If a tree and an animal cannot give themselves life and vegetation, can you give yourself thoughts?

LUCRETIUS.—I think I can, for I think of whatever I please. My intention was to converse with you about metaphysics, and I have done so.

POSIDONIUS.—You think that you are master of your ideas; do you know, then, what thoughts you will have in an hour, or in a quarter of an hour?

LUCRETIUS.—I must own that I do not.

POSIDONIUS.—You frequently have ideas in your sleep; you make verses in a dream: Cæsar takes cities: I resolve problems; and hounds pursue the stag in their dreams. Ideas, therefore, come to us independently of our own will; they are given us by a Superior Being.

LUCRETIUS.—In what manner do you mean? Do you suppose that the Supreme Being is continually employed in communicating ideas; or that he created incorporeal substances, which were afterwards capable of forming ideas of themselves,

sometimes with the assistance of the senses, and sometimes without it? Are these substances formed at the moment of the animal's conception? Or are they formed before its conception? Do they wait for bodies, in order to insinuate themselves into them? or are they not lodged there till the animal is capable of receiving them? Or, in fine, is it in the Supreme Being that every animated being sees the ideas of things? What is your opinion?

POSIDONIUS.—When you tell me how our will produces an instantaneous motion in our bodies, how your arm obeys your will, how we receive life, how food digests in the stomach, and how corn is transformed into blood, I will then tell you how we have ideas. With regard to all these particulars I frankly confess my ignorance. The world, perhaps, may one day obtain new lights; but from the time of Thales to the present age we have not had any. All we can do is to be sensible of our own weakness, to acknowledge an Almighty Being, and to be upon our guard against these systems.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A CLIENT AND HIS LAWYER

CLIENT.—Well, sir! with regard to the cause of those poor orphans?

LAWYER.—What do you mean? It is but eighteen years since their estate has been in litigation.

CLIENT.—I don't complain of that trifling matter; I know the custom well enough; I respect it, but how in the name of heaven comes it to pass that you have been these three months soliciting a hearing and have not yet obtained it?

LAWYER.—The reason is because you have not solicited an audience in person in behalf of your pupils; you ought to have waited on the judge several different times, to entreat him to try your cause.

CLIENT.—It is their duty to do justice of their own accord without waiting till it is asked them. He is a very great man that has it in his power to sit in judgment on men's lives and fortunes, but he is by no means so to desire that the miserable should wait in his antechamber. I do not go to our parson's levee to pray and beseech him to have the goodness to sing high mass, why ought I then to petition my judge to discharge the function of his office? In short, after so many and such tedious delays, are we at length going to be so happy as to have our cause tried to-day?

LAWYER.—Why yes, and there is great likelihood of your carrying a very material point in your process; you have a very decisive article in "Charondas" on your side.

CLIENT.—This same Charondas was, in all probability, some lord-chancellor in the time of one of the kings of the first race who has passed a law in favor of orphans?

LAWYER.—By no means, he is no more than a private person who has given his opinion in a great volume which nobody reads, but then your advocate quotes him, the judges take it upon his credit, so there's your cause gained in a trice.

CLIENT.—What! do you tell me the opinion of this Judge Charondas passes current for a law?

LAWYER.—But there is one devilish bad circumstance attends us. Turnet and Brodeau are both against us.

CLIENT.—These, I suppose, are two other legislators whose laws have much the same authority with those of that other hard-named gentleman.

LAWYER.—Yes, certainly, as it was impossible to explain the Roman law sufficiently in the present case the world took different sides of the question.

CLIENT.—What the devil signifies it to bring in the Roman law in this affair? Do we live in the present age under Theodosius or Justinian?

LAWYER.—By no means, but our forefathers, you must know, had a prodigious passion for tilting and fox hunting; they ran all, as if they were mad, to the Holy Land with their doxies. You will grant me that men in such a hurry of business of consequence could not be supposed to have time on their hands to frame a complete body of universal jurisprudence.

CLIENT.—Aye, aye, I understand you. For want of laws of your own you are forced to beg of Charondas and Justinian to be so good as tell you how you should proceed when an inheritance is to be divided.

LAWYER.—There you are mistaken, we have more laws than all Europe besides; almost every city has a body of laws of its own.

CLIENT.—Your most obedient. Here's another miracle.

LAWYER.—Ah! had your wards been born at Guignes-la-Putain instead of being natives of Melun near Corbeil!

CLIENT.—Very well; what had happened then, for God's sake?

LAWYER.—You should have gained your cause as sure as two and two make four, that's all, for at this same Guignes-la-Putain there is a custom which is wholly in your favor; but were you to go but two leagues beyond this, you would then be in a very different situation.

CLIENT.—But pray are not Guignes and Melun both in France? And can anything be more absurd or horrible than to tell me that what's right in one village is wrong in another? By what fatal barbarity does it happen that people born in the same country do yet live under different laws?

LAWYER.—The reason is, that formerly the inhabitants of Guignes and those of Melun were not inhabitants of the same country: these two fine cities formed in the golden days of yore two distinct empires, and the august sovereign of Guignes, though a vassal to the king of France, gave laws to his own subjects. Those laws depended on the good will and pleasure of his *major domo*, who, it seems, could not read, so that they have been handed down by a most venerable tradition from father to son, so that the whole race of the barons de Guignes becoming extinct, to the irrecoverable loss of all mankind, the conceits of their first lackeys still exist and are held for the fundamental law of the land. The case is exactly the same in every six leagues in the whole kingdom, so that you change laws every time you change horses, so you may judge what a taking we poor advocates are in when we are to plead, for instance, for an inhabitant of Poictou against an inhabitant of Auvergne.

CLIENT.—But these same men of Poictou, Auvergne, with your Guignes gentry, are they not all dressed in the same manner? Is it a harder matter to use the same laws than it is to wear the same clothes? And since it is evident the tailors and cobblers understand one another from one end of the kingdom to the other, why cannot the judges learn of them, and follow so excellent an example?

LAWYER.—You desire a thing altogether as impossible as it would be to bring the nation to make use of one sort of weights and measures. Why would you have the laws everywhere the same when you see the point is different in all places? For my own part, after thinking till my head was like to split, all I have been able to conclude for the soul of me, is this: That as the measure of Paris is different from that at St. Denis, it follows that men's judgments must also be different in both. The varieties of nature are infinite, and it would be wrong in us to endeavor to render uniform what she intends shall not be so.

CLIENT.—Yet, now I think on it, I have a strong notion the English have but one sort of weight and measures.

LAWYER.—The English! aye. Why the English are mere barbarians; they have, it is true, but one kind of measure, but, to make amends, they have a score of different religions.

CLIENT.—There you mention something strange indeed! Is it possible that a nation who live under the same laws, should not likewise live under the same religion?

LAWYER.—It is; which makes it plain they are abandoned to their own reprobate understandings.

CLIENT.—But may not it also prove that they think laws made for regulating the external actions of men and religion the internal? Possibly the English, and other nations, were of opinion that laws related to the concernments of man with man and that religion regarded man's relation to God. I am sure I should never quarrel with an Anabaptist who should take it into his head to be christened at thirty years old, but I should be horridly offended with him should he fail paying his bill of exchange. They who sin against God ought to be punished in the other world; they who sin against man ought to be chastised in this.

LAWYER.—I understand nothing of all this. I am just going to plead your cause.

CLIENT.—I wish to God you understood it better first.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN MADAME DE MAINTENON AND MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS

Madame de Maintenon and Mademoiselle Ninon de l'Enclos had lived long together. The author has often heard the late Abbé de Châteauneuf say, that Madame de Maintenon had used her utmost endeavors to engage Ninon to turn nun, and to come and comfort her at Versailles.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—'Tis true, I did request you to come to see me privately, perhaps you may think it was only to make a display of my grandeur; by no means, I really meant it that I might receive in you a real consolation—

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—Consolation, madam! I must acknowledge that, having never been favored with hearing of you since you were grown great, I concluded you must be perfectly happy.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—I have the good fortune to be thought so. There are people in the world who are satisfied with this, though, to be plain with you, it is not at all my case, I have always exceedingly regretted your company.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—I understand you. In the midst of your grandeur you were sensible of the want of friendship; and I, on the other hand, who am entirely engrossed by friendship, never had occasion to wish for grandeur; but how then comes it to pass you forgot me so long?

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—You know the necessity I was under to seem at least to forget you. Believe me, amidst all the misfortunes attached to my elevation I always considered this restraint the chief.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—As for my part, I neither forget my former pleasures nor my old friends; but if you are really unhappy, as you say you are, you impose prodigiously on the whole world who believe you otherwise.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—I was the first person deceived in this manner myself. If, while we were at supper together, in company with Villarfaux and Nantouillet at our little house the Tournelles, when the mediocrity of our fortune was scarce worth thinking of, somebody had said, You will, before 'tis long, approach very near to the throne; the most powerful monarch in the world will soon make you his sole confidante; all favors will pass through your hands; you will be regarded as a sovereign: if, said I, any one had made me such predictions I should have answered, The accomplishment of this strange prognostication must certainly kill one with mere astonishment. The whole of it was actually accomplished. I felt some surprise in the first moments but, in hoping for joy, I found myself entirely mistaken.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—A philosopher might possibly believe this, but the public will with great difficulty be brought to believe you were dissatisfied, and should they really think so they would certainly blame you for it.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—The world must then be as much in the wrong as I was. This world of ours is a vast amphitheatre where every one is placed on his bench by mere chance. They imagine the supreme degree of felicity to be on the uppermost benches. What an egregious mistake!

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—I take this mistake to be necessary to human nature: they would never give themselves any trouble about getting higher were they not led by an opinion that happiness is placed above them. Both of us are acquainted with pleasures infinitely less deceiving or fanciful, but, for Heaven's sake, how did you contrive to be so exceedingly wretched on your exalted seat?

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Alas! my dear Ninon! from the time I left off calling you anything but Mademoiselle de l'Enclos, I from that moment began to be less happy. It was decreed I must be a prude. This is telling all in one word. My heart is empty, my mind under restraint. I make the first figure in France, but it is really no more than a figure, a shadow! I live only a kind of borrowed life. Ah! did you but know what a burden it must be to a drooping soul to animate another soul or to amuse a mind no longer capable of amusement!

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—I easily guess the uneasiness of your situation. I fear insulting you should I mention the reflection that Ninon is happier at Paris in her little house with the Abbé de Châteauneuf, and some friends, than you at Versailles in the company of the most respectable personage in all Europe, who lays all his power at your feet. I am afraid to show you the superiority of my situation; I know it is wrong to discover too sensible a relish of our felicity in the presence of the unhappy. Endeavor, madam, to bear the load of your grandeur with patience, try to forget that delightful obscurity in which we formerly lived together, in the same manner you have been obliged to forget your ancient friends. The sole remedy in your painful state is to avoid reflection as much as possible, crying out with the poet,

Félicité passée,

Qui ne peut revenir,

Tourment de ma pensée,

Que n'ai-je en te perdant, perdu le souvenir!

Tormenting thought of former happiness gone, never to return! Why, when I was bereft of the joy, did I not lose the remembrance of it also!

Drink of the river Lethe, and above all, comfort yourself with having before your eyes so many royal dames whose time lies as heavy on their hands as yours can do.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Ah, my dear! what felicity can one find in being alone? I would fain make a proposal to you but I am afraid to open myself.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—Indeed, madam, to be plain with you, you have reason to be a little mistrustful, but take courage.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—I mean that you will barter, at least in appearance, your philosophy for prudery, and then you will become a truly respectable woman. You shall live with me in Versailles, you shall be more my friend than ever, and help me to support my present condition.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—I still have a great affection for you, madam, but I must freely own to you I love myself still better, and can never consent to turn hypocrite and render myself miserable forever because fortune has treated you cruelly.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Ah, cruel Ninon! you have a heart more hard than even the very courtiers themselves. Can you then abandon me without the least remorse?

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—By no means; I am still but too sensible. You really melt me, and, to convince you I have the same regard for you as ever I now make you the last offer in my power; quit Versailles and come and live with me at the rues des Tournelles.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—You pierce my very heart. I cannot be happy near the throne, nor can I enjoy pleasure in a retired life. This is one of the fatal effects of living in a court.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—There is no remedy for an incurable disorder. I shall take the opinion of the philosophers who frequent my house concerning your malady, but I cannot promise you they will effect impossibilities.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Good heavens! what a cruel situation! to behold myself on the very pinnacle of greatness, to be worshipped as a deity, and yet not to be able to taste of happiness!

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—Hold, my dear friend, I fancy there is some mistake in this; you believe yourself unhappy merely on account of your greatness, but may not the misfortune proceed from another cause, that your eyes have no longer the same lustre, your appetite no longer so good, nor your relish for pleasures so lively as heretofore? You have lost your youth, beauty, and feelings; this, this is your real misfortune. This is the reason why so many women turn devotees at fifty and so fly from one chagrin into the arms of another.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—But, after all, you have more years over your head than I have and you are neither unhappy nor a devotee.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—Let us understand each other. We ought not to imagine that at your age and mine we can enjoy complete happiness. It requires a soul glowing with the most exquisite sensations and the five senses in their highest perfection to taste this kind of felicity. But with a few friends, a little philosophy, and liberty, one may be as much at one's ease as this age will admit of. The mind is never unhappy but when out of its sphere. So e'en take my advice and come and live with me and my philosophical friends.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—I see two ministers of state coming this way. They are very different company from philosophers, so fare you well, my dear Ninon.

MADEMOISELLE DE L'ENCLOS.—Adieu, illustrious unfortunate.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A SAVAGE AND A BACHELOR OF ARTS

A governor of Cayenne, having brought over with him a savage from Guiana, who had a great share of good natural understanding, and spoke French tolerably well; a bachelor of arts at Paris had the honor of entering into the following conversation with him:

BACHELOR.—I suppose, Mr. Savage, you have seen a number of your country people who pass their lives all alone, for it is said that this is the true way of living natural to man, and that society is only an artificial depravity?

SAVAGE.—Indeed I never did see any of those people you speak of. Man appears to me to be born for society, as well as several other species of animals. Each species follows the dictates of its nature; as for us, we live all together in a community.

BACHELOR.—How! in community? Why, then, you have fine towns, and cities with walls, and kings who keep a court. You have shows, convents, universities, libraries, and taverns, have you?

SAVAGE.—No; but have I not frequently heard it said that in your continent you have Arabians and Scythians who never knew anything of these matters, and yet form considerable nations? Now we live like these people; neighboring families assist each other. We inhabit a warm climate, and so have very few necessities; we can easily procure ourselves food; we marry; we get children; we bring them up, and then we die. You see this is just the same as among you; some few ceremonies excepted.

BACHELOR.—Why, my good sir, then you are not a savage?

SAVAGE.—I do not know what you mean by that word.

BACHELOR.—Nor, to tell you the truth, do I myself—stay—let me consider a little—Oh!—a savage?—Why—a savage is—what we call a savage, is a man of a morose, unsociable disposition, who flies all company.

SAVAGE.—I have told you already that we live together in families.

BACHELOR.—We also give the name of savage to those beasts who are not tamed, but roam wild about the forests; and from hence we have transferred that appellation to men who inhabit the woods.

SAVAGE.—I go into the woods sometimes, as well as you do, to hunt.

BACHELOR.—Pray, now, do you think sometimes?

SAVAGE.—It is impossible to be without some sort of ideas.

BACHELOR.—I have a great curiosity to know what your ideas are. What think you of man?

SAVAGE.—Think of him! Why, that he is a two-footed animal, who has the faculty of reasoning, speaking, and who uses his hands much more dexterously than the monkey. I have seen several kinds of men, some white, like you, others copper-colored, like me, and others black, like those that wait upon the governor of Cayenne. You have a beard, we have none; the negroes have wool, you and I have hair. They say, that in your more northerly climates the inhabitants have white hair, whereas that of the Americans is black. This is all I know about man.

BACHELOR.—But your soul, my dear sir? your soul? what notion have you of that? whence comes it? what is it? what does it do? how does it act? where does it go?

SAVAGE.—I know nothing about all this, indeed; for I never saw the soul.

BACHELOR.—Apropos; do you think that brutes are machines?

SAVAGE.—They appear to me to be organized machines, that have sentiment and memory.

BACHELOR.—Well; and pray now, Mr. Savage, what do you think that you, you yourself, I say, possess above those brutes?

SAVAGE.—The gifts of an infinitely superior memory, a much greater share of ideas, and, as I have already told you, a tongue capable of forming many more sounds than those of brutes; with hands more ready at executing; and the faculty of laughing, which a long-winded argumentator always makes me exercise.

BACHELOR.—But tell me, if you please, how came you by all this? What is the nature of your mind? How does your soul animate your body? Do you always think? Is your will free?

SAVAGE.—Here are a great number of questions; you ask me how I came to possess what God has given to man? You might as well ask me how I was born? For certainly, since I am born a man, I must possess the things that constitute a man in the same manner as a tree has its bark, roots, and leaves. You would have me to know what is the nature of my mind. I did not give it to myself, and therefore I cannot know what it is; and as to how my soul animates my body, I am as much a stranger to that, too; and, in my opinion, you must first have seen the springs that put your watch in motion before you can tell how it shows the hour. You ask me if I always think? No, for sometimes I have half-formed ideas, in the same manner as I see objects at a distance, confusedly; sometimes my ideas are much stronger, as I can distinguish an object better when it is nearer to me; sometimes I have no ideas at all,

as when I shut my eyes I can see nothing. Lastly, you ask me, if my will is free? Here I do not understand you; these are things with which you are perfectly well acquainted, no doubt, therefore I shall be glad you will explain them to me.

BACHELOR.—Yes, yes, I have studied all these matters thoroughly; I could talk to you about them for a month together without ceasing, in such a manner as would surpass your understanding. But tell me, do you know good and evil, right and wrong? Do you know which is the best form of government? which the best worship? what is the law of nations? the common law? the civil law? the canon law? Do you know the names of the first man and woman who peopled America? Do you know the reason why rain falls into the sea; and why you have no beard?

SAVAGE.—Upon my word, sir, you take rather too great advantage of the confession I made just now, that man has a superior memory to the brutes; for I can hardly recollect the many questions you have asked me; you talk of good and evil, right and wrong; now, I think that whatever gives you pleasure, and does injury to no one, is very good and very right; that what injures our fellow-creatures, and gives us no pleasure, is abominable; and what gives us pleasure but, at the same time, hurts others, may be good with respect to us for the time, but it is in itself both dangerous to us, and very wrong in regard to others.

BACHELOR.—And do you live in society with these maxims?

SAVAGE.—Yes, with our relatives and neighbors, and, without much pain or vexation, we quietly attain our hundredth year; some indeed reach to a hundred and twenty, after which our bodies serve to fertilize the earth that has nourished us.

BACHELOR.—You seem to me to have a clear understanding, I would very fain puzzle it. Let us dine together, after which we will philosophize methodically.

SAVAGE.—I find that I have swallowed foods that are not made for me, notwithstanding I have a good stomach; you have made me eat after my stomach was satisfied, and drink when I was no longer dry. My legs are not so firm under me as they were before dinner; my head feels heavy, and my ideas are confused. I never felt this diminution of my faculties in my own country. For my part, I think the more a man puts into his body here, the more he takes away from his understanding. Pray, tell me, what is the reason of all this damage and disorder?

BACHELOR.—I will tell you. In the first place, as to what passes in your legs, I know nothing about the matter, you must consult the physicians about that; they will satisfy you in a trice. But I am perfectly well acquainted with how things go in your head. You must know, then, that the soul being confined to no place, has fixed her seat either in the pineal gland, or callous body in the middle of the brain. The animal spirits that rise from the stomach fly up to the soul, which they cannot affect, they being matter and it immaterial. Now, as neither can act upon the other, therefore the soul takes their impression, and, as it is a simple principle, and consequently subject

to no change, therefore it suffers a change, and becomes heavy and dull when we eat too much; and this is the reason that so many great men sleep after dinner.

SAVAGE.—What you tell me appears very ingenious and profound, but I should take it as a favor if you would explain it to me in such a manner as I might comprehend.

BACHELOR.—Why, I have told you everything that can be said upon this weighty affair; but, to satisfy you, I will be a little more explicit. Let us go step by step. First, then, do you know that this is the best of all possible worlds?

SAVAGE.—How! is it impossible for the Infinite Being to create anything better than what we now see?

BACHELOR.—Undoubtedly; for nothing can be better than what we see. It is true, indeed, that mankind rob and murder each other, but they all the while extol equity and moderation. Several years ago they massacred about twelve millions of your Americans, but then it was to make the rest more reasonable. A famous calculator has proved that from a certain war of Troy, which you know nothing of, to the last war in North America, which you do know something of, there have been killed in pitched battles no less than five hundred and fifty-five million six hundred and fifty thousand men, without reckoning young children and women buried under the ruins of cities and towns which have been set on fire; but this was all for the good of community; four or five thousand dreadful maladies, to which mankind are subject, teach us the true value of health; and the crimes that cover the face of the earth greatly enhance the merit of religious men, of which I am one; you see that everything goes in the best manner possible, at least as to me.

Now things could never be in this state of perfection, if the soul was not placed in the pineal gland. For—but let me take you along with me in the argument. Let us go step by step. What notion have you of laws, and of the rule of right and wrong; of the *to Kalon*, as Plato calls it?

SAVAGE.—Well, but my good sir, while you talk of going step by step, you speak to me of a hundred different things at a time.

BACHELOR.—Every one converses in this manner. But tell me who made the laws in your country?

SAVAGE.—The public good.

BACHELOR.—That word *public good* means a great deal. We have not any so expressive; pray, in what sense do you understand?

SAVAGE.—I understand by it that those who have a plantation of cocoa trees or maize, have forbidden others to meddle with them, and that those who had them not, are obliged to work, in order to have a right to eat part of them. Everything that I

have seen, either in your country or my own, teaches me that there can be no other spirit of the laws.

BACHELOR.—But as to women, Mr. Savage, women?

SAVAGE.—As to women, they please me when they are handsome and sweet-tempered; I prize them even before our cocoa trees; they are a fruit which we are not willing to have plucked by any but ourselves. A man has no more right to take my wife from me than to take my child. However, I have heard it said, that there are people who will suffer this; they have it certainly in their will; every one may do what he pleases with his own property.

BACHELOR.—But as to successors, legatees, heirs, and collateral kindred?

SAVAGE.—Every one must have a successor. I can no longer possess my field when I am buried in it, I leave it to my son; if I have two, I divide it equally between them. I hear that among you Europeans, there are several nations where the law gives the whole to the eldest child, and nothing to the younger. It must have been sordid interest that dictated such unequal and ridiculous laws. I suppose either the elder children made it themselves, or their fathers, who were willing they should have the pre-eminence.

BACHELOR.—What body of laws appears to you the best?

SAVAGE.—Those in which the interests of mankind, my fellow creatures, have been most consulted.

BACHELOR.—And where are such laws to be found?

SAVAGE.—In no place that I have ever heard of.

BACHELOR.—You must tell me from whence the inhabitants of your country first came? Who do you think first peopled America?

SAVAGE.—God—whom else should we think?

BACHELOR.—That is no answer. I ask you from what country your people first came?

SAVAGE.—The same country from which our trees came; really the Europeans appear to me a very pleasant kind of people, to pretend that we can have nothing without them; we have just as much reason to suppose ourselves your ancestors as you have to imagine yourselves ours.

BACHELOR.—You are an obstinate little savage.

SAVAGE.—You a very babbling bachelor.

BACHELOR.—But, hark ye, Mr. Savage, one word more with you, if you please. Do you think it right in Guiana to put those to death who are not of the same opinion with yourselves?

SAVAGE.—Undoubtedly, provided you eat them afterwards.

BACHELOR.—Now you are joking. What do think of the constitution?

SAVAGE.—Your servant.

A TREATISE ON TOLERATION

CHAPTER 1. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF JOHN CALAS

The murder of John Calas, committed in Toulouse with the sword of justice, the 9th of March, 1762, is an event which, on account of its singularity, calls for the attention of the present age, and that of posterity. We soon forget the crowd of victims who have fallen in the course of innumerable battles, not only because this is a destiny inevitably connected with a life of warfare, but because those who thus fell might also have given death to their enemies, and did not lose their lives till after having first stood in their own defence. Where the danger and the advantage are equal, our wonder ceases, and even pity itself is in some measure lessened; but where the father of an innocent family is delivered up to the sword of error, prejudice, or enthusiasm, where the accused person has no other defence but his conscious virtue; where the arbiters of his destiny have nothing to hazard in putting him to death but the having been mistaken, and where they may murder with impunity under the sanction of a judicial process, then every one is ready to cry out, every one brings the case home to himself, and sees with fear and trembling that no person's life is in safety in a court erected to watch over the lives of the subject, the public unite in demanding vengeance.

In this strange affair, we find religion, self-murder and parricide blended. The object of inquiry was, whether a father and a mother had murdered their own son with a view to please God, and whether a brother had murdered his brother, or a friend his friend; or whether the judges had to reproach themselves with having publicly executed an innocent father, or with having acquitted a guilty mother, brother, and friend.

John Calas, a person of sixty-eight years of age, had followed the profession of a merchant in Toulouse for upwards of forty years, and had always borne the character of a tender parent in his family and neighborhood; he was himself by religion a Protestant, as was also his wife, and all his children, one son only excepted, who had abjured heresy, and to whom the father allowed a small annuity; indeed, the good man appeared so far from being infected with that absurd zeal which destroys the bands of society, that he even approved of the conversion of his son, Louis Calas. He had for above thirty years kept in his house a maid-servant, who was a zealous Catholic, and who had brought up all his children.

Another of his sons, whose name was Mark Antony, was a man of letters, but, at the same time, of a restless, gloomy, and impetuous disposition. This young man finding that he had no prospect of getting into business as a merchant, for which indeed he was very unfit, nor of being admitted to the bar as a lawyer, as not being able to obtain the requisite certificates of his being a Catholic, resolved to lay violent hands upon himself, and gave some intimation of his design to one of his friends. In order

to confirm himself in the resolution he had formed, he carefully collected everything that had been written upon the subject of suicide, all of which he read with great attention; at length, one day, having lost all his money at play, he chose that as a most proper opportunity for putting his design into execution. One Lavaisse, a young man of nineteen years of age, the son of a lawyer in great repute at Toulouse, and who was esteemed by every one who knew him, happened to come from Bordeaux the evening before,[1] when he went by chance to sup with the Calas family at their house, being an acquaintance of that family's, and of Mark Antony Calas in particular. Old Calas, his wife, Mark Antony, their eldest son, and Peter their second son, supped all together that evening; after supper was over, they retired into another room, where Mark Antony suddenly disappeared. After some time, young Lavaisse took his leave, and Peter Calas accompanied him downstairs; when they came to the warehouse they saw Mark Antony hanging in his shirt behind the door, and his coat and waistcoat folded up and laid upon the counter; his shirt was not in the least rumpled, nor his hair, which he had dressed that day, in any wise disordered; there was no wound upon his body, nor any other mark of violence.[2]

We shall not here enter into all the minute circumstances with which the lawyers have filled their briefs; nor shall we attempt to describe the grief and distraction of the unhappy parents; their cries were heard by the whole neighborhood. Lavaisse and Peter Calas, almost beside themselves, ran, the one to fetch a surgeon, and the other an officer of justice. While they were thus employed, and old Calas and his wife in all the agonies of grief, the people of the town gathered in crowds about the house. The Toulousians are a superstitious and headstrong people, and look upon all persons, even their own relations, who are not of the same religion as themselves, as monsters and objects of detestation. It was at Toulouse that a solemn thanksgiving was ordered for the death of Henry III. and that the inhabitants took an oath to murder the first person who should propose to acknowledge that great and good prince Henry IV. for their sovereign; and this same city still continues to solemnize, by an annual procession, illuminations, and bonfires, the day on which, about two hundred years ago, it ordered the massacre of four thousand of its citizens for being heretics. In vain has the council issued six decrees prohibiting the keeping of this detestable anniversary, the Toulousians still continuing to celebrate it as a high festival.

Some one among the mob, a greater enthusiast than the rest, cried out that John Calas himself had hanged his son; this cry became in an instant unanimous, some persons taking occasion to observe that the deceased was to have made his abjuration the next day, and that his own family and young Lavaisse had murdered him out of the hatred they bore to the Catholic religion. No sooner was this opinion broached, than it was fully believed by every one; and the whole town was

[1] 12 October, 1761.

[2] After the body was carried to the town-house, indeed, there was found a little scratch upon the end of the nose, and a small black and blue spot upon the breast; but these were probably occasioned by some carelessness in removing the corpse.

persuaded that it is one of the articles of the Protestant religion for a father or mother to murder their own son, if he attempts to show any inclination to change his faith.

When the minds of the populace are once put into a ferment they are not easily appeased; it was now imagined that all the Protestants of Languedoc had assembled together the preceding night, and had chosen by a plurality of voices one of their sect for an executioner; that the choice had fallen upon Lavaisse; that this young man had, in less than four and twenty hours, received the news of his election, and had come from Bordeaux to assist John Calas, his wife, and their son Peter, to murder a son, a brother, and a friend.

The Sieur David, capitoul of Toulouse, instigated by these rumors, and being desirous of bringing himself into notice, by the ready execution of his office, took a step contrary to all the established rules and ordinances, by ordering the Calas family, together with their Catholic maid-servant and Lavaisse, to be put in irons.

After this a monitory was published, which was as erroneous as the former step. Nay, matters were carried still farther; Mark Antony Calas had certainly died a Calvinist, and as such, if he had laid violent hands on himself, his body ought to have been dragged on a hurdle; whereas it was interred with the greatest funeral pomp in the church of St. Stephen, notwithstanding the curate entered his protest against this profanation of holy ground.

There are in Languedoc four orders of penitents, the white, the blue, the gray, and the black, who wear a long capuchin or hood, having a mask of cloth falling down over the face, in which are two holes for the sight. These orders wanted the Duke of Fitz-James to become one of their body, but he refused them. On the present occasion the white penitents performed a solemn service for Mark Antony Calas as for a martyr; nor was the festival of a real martyr ever celebrated with greater pomp by any church: but then this pomp was truly terrible. Beneath a magnificent canopy was placed a skeleton, which was made to move by springs; this skeleton was to represent Mark Antony Calas, holding in one hand a branch of palm, and, in the other, the pen with which he was to sign his abjuration of heresy; or rather, as the sequel proved, the death-warrant of his father.

And now nothing more remained to be done for this wretch who had been his own murderer but the office of canonization; the people, already to a man, looked on him as a saint; some invoked him, some went to pray at his tomb, some besought him to work miracles, while others gravely recounted those he had already performed; a monk pulled out one or two of his teeth, in order to have some lasting relics; an old woman, more pious than the rest, but unhappily troubled with a deafness, declared that she had heard the sound of bells very plainly at his interment; and a priest was cured of an apoplectic fit, after taking a stout emetic; protocols were drawn up of these stupendous miracles, and the author of this account has in his possession an affidavit to prove that a young man of Toulouse had his brain turned, on having

prayed several nights successively at the tomb of the new saint, without having been able to obtain the miracle he requested of him.

Among the order of the white penitents there were some magistrates of justice; the death of John Calas seemed then inevitable.

But what more particularly hastened his fate was the approach of that singular festival, which, as I have already observed, the Toulousians celebrate every year, in commemoration of the massacre of four thousand Huguenots; the year 1762 happened to be the *annum seculare* of this execrable deed. The inhabitants were busied in making preparations for the solemnity; this circumstance added fresh fuel to the heated imagination of the populace; every one cried out that a scaffold for the execution of the Calas family would be one of the greatest ornaments of the ceremony; and that heaven itself seemed to have brought them thither as victims, to be sacrificed to our holy religion. Twenty persons were ear-witnesses to these speeches, and to others still more outrageous. And this, in the present age! this at a time when philosophy has made so great a progress! and while the pens of a hundred academies are employed in inculcating humanity and gentleness of manners. It should seem that enthusiasm enraged at the late success of reason, fought under her standard with redoubled fury.

Thirteen judges met every day to try this cause; they had not, they could not, have any proof against this unhappy family; but mistaken zeal held the place of proofs. Six of the judges continued a long time obstinate, being resolved to sentence John Calas, his son, and Lavaisse, to be broken on the wheel, and his wife to be burned at the stake; the other seven judges, rather more moderate, were at least for having the accused examined; the debates were frequent and long. One of the judges, convinced in his mind of the innocence of the parties, and of the impossibility of the crime laid to their charge, spoke warmly in their favor; he opposed the zeal of humanity to that of cruelty, and openly pleaded the cause of the Calas family in all the houses of Toulouse where misguided religion demanded with incessant cries the blood of these unfortunate wretches. Another judge, well known for his violence and severity, went about the town, raving with as much fury against the accused as his brother had been earnest in defending them. In short, the contest became so warm that both were obliged to enter protests against each other’s proceedings, and retire into the country.

But by a strange fatality, the judge who had been on the favorable side had the delicacy to persist in his exceptions, and the other returned to give his vote against those on whom he could no longer sit as judge; and it was his single vote which carried the sentence of being broken upon the wheel against them, there being eight voices against five, one of the six merciful judges being at last, after much contestation, brought over to the rigorous side.

In my opinion, in cases of parricide, and where the master of a family is to be devoted to the most dreadful punishment, the sentence ought to be unanimous, inasmuch as the proofs of so unparalleled[3] a crime ought to be proved in such a manner as to satisfy all the world, and the least shadow of a doubt in a case of this nature should be sufficient to make the judge tremble who is about to pass sentence of death. The weakness of our reason, and the insufficiency of our laws, become every day more obvious; but surely there cannot be a greater example of this deficiency than that one single casting vote should be sufficient to condemn a fellow-citizen to be broken alive on the wheel; the Athenians required at least fifty voices, over and above the one-half of the judges, before they would dare to pronounce sentence of death; but to what does all this tend? Why, to what we know, but make very little use of, that the Greeks were wiser and more humane than ourselves.

It appeared altogether impossible that John Calas, who was an old man of sixty-eight, and had a long while been troubled with a swelling and weakness in his legs, should have been able by himself to have mastered his son and hanged him, who was a stout young fellow of eight and twenty, and more than commonly robust; therefore he must absolutely have been assisted in this act by his wife, his other son, Peter Calas, Lavaisse, and by the servant-maid, and they had been together the whole night of this fatal adventure. But this supposition is altogether as absurd as the other; for can any one believe that a servant, who was a zealous Catholic, would have permitted those whom she looked on as heretics to murder a young man whom she herself had brought up, for his attachment to a religion to which she herself was devoted; that Lavaisse would have come purposely from Bordeaux to assist in hanging his friend, of whose pretended conversion he knew nothing, or that an affectionate mother would have joined in laying violent hands on her own son? And lastly, how could they all together have been able to strangle a young man stronger than them all, without a long and violent struggle, or without his making such a noise as must have been heard by the whole neighborhood, without repeated blows passing between them, without any marks of violence, or without any of their clothes being in the least soiled or disordered!

[3] I know of but two instances in history of fathers having murdered their children on the score of religion; the first is the father of St. Barbara, as she is called; it seems he had ordered two windows to be made in his bathing-room. St. Barbara in his absence took it into her head to make a third in honor of the Holy Trinity; she also with the end of her finger made the sign of the cross upon the marble pillars, which remained deeply impressed thereon; her father, in a violent fury to have his room thus marked, runs after her with his sword in his hand with an intention to kill her; she flies towards a mountain, which very complaisantly opens upon her approach to give her a passage. Her father finds himself obliged to go round about, and at length gets hold of his fugitive daughter, whom he strips and prepares to scourge; but God envelops her with a white cloud; however, after all, her father caused her head to be struck off. This is the story as we find it related in the book called “The Flower of Saints.”
The second instance is of Prince Hermenegildus, who raised a rebellion against the king, his father, and gave him battle in the year 584, but was himself defeated and slain by one of his father’s generals; however, he has been placed among the martyrs, because his father was an Arian.

It was evident that if this murder could in the nature of things have been committed, the accused persons were all of them equally guilty, because they did not quit each other's company an instant the whole night; but then it was equally evident that they were not guilty, and that the father alone could not be so, and yet, by the sentence of the judges, the father alone was condemned to suffer.

The motive on which this sentence was passed was as unaccountable as all the rest of the proceeding. Those judges who had given their opinion for the execution of John Calas persuaded the others that this poor old man, unable to support the torments, would, when on the wheel, make a full confession of his own guilt and that of his accomplices; but how wretchedly were they confounded, when yielding up his breath on that instrument of execution, he called God as a witness of his innocence, and besought Him to forgive his judges!

They were afterwards obliged to pass a second decree, which contradicted the first, namely to set at liberty the mother, her son Peter, young Lavaisse, and the maid-servant; but one of the counsellors having made them sensible that this latter decree contradicted the other, and that they condemned themselves, inasmuch as, it having been proved that all the accused parties had been constantly together during the whole time the murder was supposed to be committed, the setting at liberty the survivors was an incontestable proof of the innocence of the master of the family whom they had ordered to be executed; on this it was determined to banish Peter Calas, the son, which was an act as ill-grounded and absurd as any of the rest, for Peter Calas was either guilty or not guilty of the murder; if he was guilty, he ought to have suffered in the same manner as his father; if he was innocent, there was no reason for banishing him. But the judges, frightened with the sufferings of the father, and with that affecting piety with which he had resigned his life, thought to preserve their characters by making people believe that they showed mercy to the son; as if this was not a new degree of prevarication, and that, thinking no bad consequences could arise from banishing this young man, who was poor and destitute of friends, was not a very great additional act of injustice after that which they had been already so unfortunate as to commit.

They now began to go to work with Peter Calas in his confinement, threatening to treat him as they had done his father, if he would not abjure his religion. This the young man has declared on oath, as follows:

"A Dominican friar came to me to my cell, and threatened me with the same kind of death if I did not abjure; this I attest before God, this 23d day of July, 1762.

PETER CALAS."

As Peter was going out of the town, he was met by one of the abbés with a converting spirit, who made him return back to Toulouse, where he was shut up in a convent of Dominicans, and there compelled to perform all the functions of a convert to the Catholic religion; this was in part what his persecutors aimed at, it was the

price of his father's blood, and due atonement now seemed to be made to the religion of which they looked on themselves as the avengers.

The daughters were next taken from their mother, and shut up in a convent. This unhappy woman, who had been, as it were, sprinkled with the blood of her husband, who had held her eldest son lifeless within her arms, had seen the other banished, her daughters taken from her, herself stripped of her effects, and left alone in the wide world destitute of bread, and bereft of hopes, was almost weighed down to the grave with the excess of her misfortunes. Some certain persons, who had maturely weighed all the circumstances of this horrible adventure, were so struck with them that they pressed Mrs. Calas, who now led a life of retirement and solitude, to exert herself, and go and demand justice at the foot of the throne. At this time she was scarcely able to drag about the remains of a miserable life; besides, having been born in England and brought over to a distant province in France when very young, the very name of the city of Paris frightened her. She imagined that in the capital of the kingdom they must be still more cruel than in Toulouse; at length, however, the duty of revenging the death of her husband got the better of her weakness. She set out for Paris, arrived there half dead, and was surprised to find herself received with tenderness, sympathy, and offers of assistance.

In Paris reason always triumphs over enthusiasm, however great, whereas in the more distant provinces of the kingdom, enthusiasm almost always triumphs over reason.

M. de Beaumont, a famous lawyer of the Parliament of Paris, immediately took her cause in hand, and drew up an opinion, which was signed by fifteen other lawyers. M. Loiseau, equally famous for his eloquence, likewise drew up a memorial in favor of this unhappy family; and M. Mariette, solicitor to the council, drew up a formal statement of the case, which struck every one who read it with conviction.

These three noble defenders of the laws and of innocence made the widow a present of all the profits arising from the publication of these pieces,[4] which filled not only Paris but all Europe with pity for this unfortunate woman, and every one cried aloud for justice to be done her. In a word, the public passed sentence on this affair long before it was determined by the council.

The soft infection made its way even to the Cabinet, notwithstanding the continual round of business, which often excludes pity, and the familiarity of beholding miserable objects, which too frequently steels the heart of the statesman against the cries of distress. The daughters were restored to their disconsolate mother, and all three in deep mourning, and bathed in tears, drew a sympathetic flood from the eyes

[4] It is necessary for the English reader to understand that in Paris it is customary for the great lawyers or counsellors employed in any remarkable case to publish their pleadings on each side. On this occasion, however, our author observes, "that these publications were pirated in several towns, by which Mrs. Calas lost the advantage that was intended her by this act of generosity."

of their judges, before whom they prostrated themselves in thankful acknowledgment.

Nevertheless, this family had still some enemies to encounter, for it is to be considered that this was an affair of religion. Several persons, whom in France we call *dévots*,[5] declared publicly that it was much better to suffer an old Calvinist, though innocent, to be broken alive upon the wheel, than to expose eight counsellors of Languedoc to the mortification of being obliged to own that they had been mistaken; nay, these people made use of this very expression: “That there were more magistrates than Calases”; by which it would seem they inferred that the Calas family ought to be sacrificed to the honor of the magistracy. Alas! they never reflected that the honor of a judge, like that of another man, consists in making reparation for the faults he may have committed.

In France no one believes that the pope, even when assisted by his cardinals, is infallible; ought they then to have believed that eight judges of Toulouse were so? Every sensible and disinterested person did without scruple declare that the decree of the court of justice of Toulouse would be looked upon as void by all Europe, even though particular considerations might prevent it from being declared so by the council.

Such was the state of this surprising affair when it occasioned certain impartial, but sensible, persons to form the design of laying before the public a few reflections upon toleration, indulgence, and commiseration, which the Abbé Houteville in his bombastic and declamatory work, which is false in all the facts, calls a *monstrous doctrine*, but which reason calls the portion of human nature.

Either the judges of Toulouse, carried away by popular enthusiasm, caused the innocent master of a family to be put to a painful and ignominious death, a thing which is without example; or this master of a family and his wife murdered their eldest son, with the assistance of another son and a friend, which is altogether contrary to nature. In either case, the most holy of all religions has been perverted to the production of an enormous crime. It is therefore to the interest of mankind to examine how far charity or cruelty is consistent with true religion.

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[5] *Dévot*, or as we call it in English, devotee, comes from the Latin word *devotus*. The *devoti* of ancient Rome were such persons who devoted themselves to death for the safety or good of the republic, as the Curtii and Decii.

CHAPTER 2. CONSEQUENCES OF THE EXECUTION OF JOHN CALAS

If the order of white penitents had been the cause of the punishment of an innocent person, and of the utter ruin and dispersion of a whole family, and of branding them with that ignominy which is annexed to those who suffer, when it ought properly to fall only upon those who pass an unjust sentence; if the frantic hurry of these penitents in celebrating as a saint one whom they ought to have treated as a self-murderer, brought a virtuous, an innocent fellow-citizen to the scaffold, surely this fatal mistake ought to make them true penitents for the rest of their lives, and they and the judges ought to have their eyes continually filled with tears, without wearing a white cloak or a mask on their faces, to hide those tears. We have a proper respect for all religious orders—they are edifying; but will all the good they have ever been able to do the state compensate for the shocking disaster of which they have been the cause? Their institution seems to have been the work of that zeal which animates the Catholics of Languedoc against those we call Huguenots. One would be tempted to imagine that they had made a vow to hate their brethren; and that, though men have religion enough to hate and persecute, they have not sufficient to love and cherish one another. But what would be the case if these orders were governed by enthusiastic superiors, as were certain congregations, among whom, to use the words of one of our most eloquent and learned magistrates, the custom of seeing visions was reduced to an art and system? Or that their convents had in them those dark rooms, called meditation rooms, which were filled with pictures of frightful devils, armed with long horns and talons, flaming gulfs, crosses, and daggers, with the holy name of Jesus in a scroll over them? Edifying spectacles, doubtless, for eyes already blinded with fanaticism, and for imaginations no less filled with mistaken zeal than with abject submission to the will of their directors!

There have been times, and we know it but too well, in which religious orders have been dangerous to the state. The Frérots and the Flagellants have excited troubles in the kingdom. The League owed its origin to such associations. But wherefore should any set of men thus distinguish themselves from the rest of their fellow-citizens? Is it that they think themselves more perfect? If so, it is offering an insult to the rest of the community; or are they desirous that every Christian should become a member of their society? Truly, it would be a curious sight to see all the inhabitants of Europe in long hoods and masks, with two little round holes to peep through! Or, lastly, do they seriously think that this dress is more acceptable to God than the coats and waistcoats we usually wear? No, no, there is something more at the bottom; this habit is a kind of controversial uniform, a signal for those of a contrary opinion to stand upon their guard, and might in time kindle a kind of civil war in our minds that would terminate in the most terrible consequences, were not the wisdom of the king and of his ministers as great as the folly of these fanatics.

Every one is sufficiently sensible what fatal effects have arisen since Christians have begun to dispute among themselves concerning modes of belief; the blood of the subjects has flown in torrents either on the scaffold or in the field, from the fourth century to the present time. But let us confine ourselves only to the wars and disasters which the disputes concerning reformation have excited in France, and examine into their source. Perhaps a short and faithful portrait of these numberless calamities may open the eyes of some who have not had the advantage of education, and touch those hearts which are not by nature callous.

CHAPTER 3. A SKETCH OF THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

When learning began to revive, and the understandings of mankind became more enlightened, there was a general complaint of errors and abuses, and every one acknowledged the complaint to be just.

Pope Alexander VI. made a public purchase of the pontifical crown, and his five bastards shared with him the profits. His son, the Cardinal Duke of Borgia, in concert with the pope, his father, caused the noble families of Vitelli, Urbino, Gravina, and Oliveretto, together with a hundred other lords, to be made away with, in order to seize upon their estates. Julius II., full of the same spirit, excommunicated Louis XII. of France, while he himself, armed cap-a-pie, ravaged a part of Italy with fire and sword. Leo X., in order to raise money to pay the expenses of his pleasures, made a sale of indulgences, like goods in a common market. Those who opposed such shameful impositions were certainly right in a moral view; let us see how far they were so with regard to us, in a political one.

They asserted that as Jesus Christ had never exacted annats, nor reversions, nor sold dispensations for this world nor indulgences for the next, they saw no reason why they should pay a foreign prince his price for these things. Supposing that the annats, the law proceedings in the pope's court, and the dispensations which still subsist were to cost us no more than five hundred thousand crowns a year; it is clear that since the time of Francis I., that is, in two hundred and fifty years, we have paid a hundred and twenty millions; and if we calculate the different value of the mark of silver, we shall find that this sum amounts to about two hundred and fifty millions of the present money. It may therefore, I think, without any blasphemy be allowed that the heretics in proposing the abolition of these extraordinary taxes, which will be the admiration of posterity, did, in that respect, no great injury to the kingdom, and showed themselves good calculators rather than bad subjects. Add to this, that they were the only persons who understood the Greek language, or had any knowledge of antiquity; let us own likewise, without dissimulation, that with all their errors, we are indebted to them for the opening of our understandings, which had been long buried beneath the most barbarous obscurity.

But as they denied the doctrine of purgatory, concerning which no one ought to have the least doubt, and which, moreover, brought in a comfortable revenue to the monks; as they paid no reverence to relics which every one ought to reverence, and which brought in still greater profits; and lastly, as they attacked the most respectable tenets,[6] their adversaries made them no other reply than by committing

[6] They revived the opinion of Berengarius, concerning the eucharist; they denied that a body can exist in a thousand different places at one time, even by all the exertion of divine omnipotence; they also denied that attributes can subsist without a subject; they held that it was absolutely impossible that

them to the stake. The king, who styled himself their protector, and who kept a body of them in pay in Germany, marched at the head of a procession through Paris, which was concluded by the execution of a number of these unhappy wretches, in the following manner:

They were suspended at the end of a long beam, which played upon a pole erected for that purpose, and underneath them was kindled a large fire, into which they were alternately lowered and then raised up again, by which they experienced the most excruciating torments, till a lingering death at last put an end to the longest and most dreadful punishment that cruelty ever invented.

A short time before the death of Francis I., the members of the Parliament of Provence, whom the clergy had incensed against the inhabitants of Mirandol and Cabrière, applied to the king for a body of troops to attend the execution of nineteen persons of that country who had been condemned by them; with the assistance of this armed force they massacred about six thousand souls, without sparing sex or age, and reduced thirty villages to ashes. The people who were the objects of these executions, and who had, till then, been in a manner unknown, were doubtless to blame for having been born Vaudois, but this was their only crime. They had been settled for upwards of three hundred years in deserts and on mountains, which they had rendered fertile by incredible labor, and led a pastoral and quiet life, the perfect image of the innocence which we find attributed to the first ages of the world. They had no acquaintance with the towns or villages round about them, except that obtained by carrying the produce of their grounds thither to sell. Totally ignorant of all military operations, they made no defence, but were slaughtered like timorous animals, whom we drive into a net and then knock them on the head.[7]

what appears to be simple bread and wine to the sight, the taste, and the stomach, can in the very instant of its existence be annihilated or changed into another substance; in a word, they maintained all those errors for which Berengarius was formerly condemned. They founded their belief on several passages of the ancient fathers of the church, and particularly of St. Justin, who says expressly in his Dialogue against Typhon, “That the offering of fine flour is the figure of the eucharist, which Christ has ordered us to make in commemoration of his passion;
χαὶ ἡ τῆς σεμιδαλέως, *&c.*, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας, ὃν είς ἀνάμνμησιν τοῦ πάθους, *&c.* Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ χύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωχε ποιεῖν.”
They revived all that had been advanced in the first ages against the worship of relics, and brought these words of Vigilantius for their authority: “What necessity is there for your paying adoration or even respect to a mass of vile dust? Can it be supposed that the souls of deceased martyrs retain after their death an affection for their ashes? The customs of the ancient idolaters are now introduced into the Church; we begun to light tapers at noonday; we may, indeed, during our lifetime, mutually pray for each other; but of what service can such prayers be after death?”

[7] The candid and venerable President de Thou expresses himself thus concerning these innocent and unfortunate persons: “*Homines esse qui trecentis circiter abhinc annis asperum & incultum solum vectigale a dominis acceperint, quod improbo labore & assiduo cultu frugum ferax & aptum pecori reddiderint; patientissimos eos laboris & inediæ, a litibus abhorrentes, erga, egenos munificos, tributa principi & sua jura dominis sedulo & summa fide pendere; Dei cultum assiduis precibus & morum innocentiam præ se ferre, ceterum raro divorum templa adire, nisi si quando ad vicina suis finibus oppida mercandi aut negotiorum causa divertant; quo si quandoque pedem inferant, non dei, divorumque statuis advolvi, nec cereos eis aut donaria ulla ponere; non sacerdotes ab eis rogari ut pro se, aut propinquorum manibus rem divinam faciant, non cruce frontem insigniri uti aliorum moris*

After the death of Francis I., a prince who, it must be confessed, was more remarkable for his gallantries and his misfortunes than for his cruelty, the execution of a thousand heretics, and in particular that of Dubourg, a counsellor of the parliament, together with the massacre of Vassy, made the persecuted fly to arms. Their sect multiplied in proportion with the fires lighted for them, and the swords of executioners drawn against them, patience gave way to rage, and they followed the example of their enemies in cruelty. Nine civil wars filled France with carnage, and a peace, more fatal than war itself, produced the day of St. Bartholomew, which stands without example in the annals of crime.

Henry III. and Henry IV. fell victims to the league, the one by the hand of a Dominican friar, and the other by that of a monster who had been a brother of the mendicant order. There are those who pretend that humanity, indulgence, and liberty of conscience are horrible things; I would ask such persons seriously, if they could have produced calamities comparable to those I have just related?

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est; cum cœlum intonant non se lustrali aqua aspergere, sed sublatis in cœlum oculis dei opem implorare; non religionis ergo peregre proficisci, non per vias ante crucium simulacra caput aperire; sacra alio ritu, & populari lingua celebrare; non denique Pontifici aut Episcopis honorem deferre, sed quosdam e suo numero delectos pro antistibus & doctoribus habere. Hæc uti ad Franciscum relata VI." Id. Feb. anni &c.

Madame de Cental, who was proprietor of part of the lands thus laid waste and drenched in the blood of their quondam inhabitants, applied for redress to Henry II., who referred her to the Parliament of Paris. The solicitor-general of Provence, whose name was Guerin and who had been the principal author of these massacres, was condemned to lose his head, and was the only one who suffered on this occasion the punishment due to the other accomplices in his guilt, because, says de Thou, *aulicorum favore destituertur*, he had not friends at court.

CHAPTER 4. WHETHER TOLERATION IS DANGEROUS, AND AMONG WHAT NATIONS IT IS PRACTISED

Some people will have it, that if we were to make use of humanity and indulgence towards our mistaken brethren who pray to God in bad French, it would be putting arms into their hands, and we should see revived the bloody days of Jarnac, Moncontour, Coutras, Dreux, St. Denis, and others. I know not how this may be, as I have not the gift of prophecy, but I really cannot discover the congruity of this reasoning, “that because these men took up arms against me when I oppressed them, they will do the same if I show them favor.”

And here I would willingly take the liberty to entreat those who have the reins of government in hand, or are destined to fill the highest stations, for once to examine maturely whether there is any reason to apprehend that indulgence would occasion the same rebellions as cruelty and oppression, and whether what has happened under certain circumstances would happen under others of a different nature, or whether times, opinions, and manners are always the same?

The Huguenots, it cannot be denied, have formerly given in to all the rage of enthusiasm, and have been polluted with blood as well as ourselves, but can it be said that the present generation is as barbarous as the former? Have not time and reason, which have lately made so great progress, together with good books, and that natural softness introduced from society, found their way among those who have the guidance of these people? And do we not clearly perceive that almost all Europe has undergone a change within the last century?

The hands of government have everywhere been strengthened, while the minds of the people have been softened and civilized; the general police, supported by numerous standing armies, leave us no longer any cause to fear the return of those times of anarchy, when Protestant boors and Catholic peasants were hastily called together from the labors of agriculture to wield the sword against each others’ lives.

Alia tempora, aliæ curæ. It would be highly absurd in the present days to decimate the body of the Sorbonne because it formerly petitioned for burning the *Pucelle d’Orléans* because it declared Henry III. to have lost his right to the throne, and because it excommunicated and proscribed the illustrious Henry IV. We certainly should not think of prosecuting the other public bodies of the nation, who committed the like excesses in those times of error and madness; it would not only be very unjust, but as ridiculous as if we were to oblige all the inhabitants of Marseilles to undergo a course of physic because they had the plague in 1720.

Should we at present go and sack Rome, as the troops of Charles the Fifth did, because Pope Sixtus the Fifth, in the year 1585, granted a nine years’ indulgence to all Frenchmen who would take up arms against their sovereign? No, surely it is

enough if we prevent the court of Rome from ever being guilty of such excesses in the future.

The rage inspired by a spirit of controversy, and the abuse made of the Christian religion from want of properly understanding it, has occasioned as much bloodshed, and produced as many calamities in Germany, England, and even in Holland, as in France; and yet, at present, the difference in religion occasions no disturbances in those countries; but the Jew, the Catholic, the Lutheran, the Calvinist, the Anabaptist, the Socinian, the Moravian, and a multitude of other sects live in brotherly harmony together, and contribute equally to the good of society.

In Holland they no longer fear that the disputations of a Gomar[8] concerning predestination should bring the head of a grand pensionary to the block, nor in London that the quarrels between the Presbyterians and the Episcopals about a form of prayer and a surplice should again spill the blood of their kings upon a scaffold.[9] Ireland, now populous and rich, will not any more behold its Catholic inhabitants sacrificing, as an acceptable offering, the lives of their Protestant brethren, by burying them alive, hanging up mothers upon gibbets, and tying their daughters round their necks to see them expire together; ripping up women with child, taking the half-formed infant from the womb, and throwing it to swine or dogs to be devoured; putting a dagger into the hands of their manacled prisoners, and forcing them to plunge it into the breasts of their fathers, their mothers, their wives, or children, thereby hoping to make them guilty of parricide, and damn their souls while they destroyed their bodies; all which we find related by Rapin, who served as an officer in the English service in Ireland, and who lived very near the time of those transactions, and confirmed by most of the English historians. No! such cruelties as these were never to be paralleled, so they doubtless will never be imitated. Philosophy, the sister of religion, has herself snatched the poniard from the hands of superstition, so long bathed in blood; and the human understanding, recovered from

[8] Francis Gomar was a Protestant divine; he maintained, in contradiction to Arminius, his colleague, that God has, from all eternity, predestined the greatest part of mankind to burn in everlasting flames: this infernal doctrine was supported in the manner most suitable to it, by persecution. The grand pensionary Barneveldt, who was of the party which opposed Gomar, was beheaded on the 13th of May, 1619, at the age of seventy-two, "*for having*" (says his sentence) "*used his uttermost endeavors to vex the Church of God*."

[9] A pompous writer, in his apology for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, speaking of England, has these words: "These were the natural fruits of a false religion; there remained only one to be brought to perfection, which these islanders, justly the contempt of all nations, have cherished, and adapted to themselves." Certainly this author has been a little unfortunate in choosing his time for representing the English as a people despicable and despised by all the world; for surely, when a nation gives the most signal proofs of its bravery and generosity, and when its victorious ensigns wave in the four parts of the world, no great credit is to be given to the writer who shall represent it as contemptible and contemned. But we must observe that it is in a chapter in favor of persecution that we meet with this extraordinary passage; and none but such as preach persecution can write thus. This detestable book, which seems the work of a madman, was composed by a person who has no ecclesiastical cure; for what real pastor would write in such a manner? The author has even carried his enthusiastic fury to such a length as to justify the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It might be supposed that a production full of such shocking paradoxes would be in the hands of almost every one, were it only on account of its singularity, and yet it seems to be hardly known.

its delirium, stands amazed at the shocking brutalities into which it has been hurried by enthusiasm.

We ourselves know that in France there is a rich and populous province where the Protestant religion prevails much more than that of the Church of Rome. The University of Alsace consists almost entirely of Lutherans, and they are likewise in possession of most of the civil posts in that province; and yet the public peace has never once been disturbed by any quarrels about religion since that province has belonged to our kings. And what is the reason? Because no one is persecuted there on account of his religion. Seek not to lay a restraint upon the mind, and you may always be sure that the mind will be yours.

I do not mean by this to insinuate that those who are of a different faith to the prince under whose government they live should have an equal share in the places of profits and honor with those who are of the established religion of the state. In England the Roman Catholics, who are in general looked upon to be friends to the Pretender, are excluded from all civil posts, and are even double-taxed; but then, in every other respect, they enjoy the prerogatives of citizens.

Some of our bishops in France have been suspected of thinking that their honor and interest is concerned in not suffering any Protestants within their diocese, and that this is the principal obstacle to allowing of toleration amongst us; but this I cannot believe. The episcopal body in France is composed of persons of quality, who think and act in a manner suitable to their high birth; and as envy itself must confess that they are generous and charitable, they therefore certainly cannot think that those whom they thus drive out of their diocese would become converts in any other country, but great honor would redound from the conversion of them at home; nor would the prelate be any loser by it in his temporals, seeing that the greater the number of the inhabitants, the greater is the value of the land.

A certain Polish bishop had a farmer who was an Anabaptist, and a receiver of his rents who was a Socinian. Some person proposed to the bishop to prosecute the latter in the spiritual court for not believing in transubstantiation, and to turn the other out of his farm because he would not have his son christened till he was fifteen years of age; the prelate very prudently replied that though he made no doubt of their being eternally damned in the next world, yet he found them extremely necessary to him in this.

Let us now for a while quit our own little sphere, and take a survey of the rest of the globe. The Grand Seignior peaceably rules over subjects of twenty different religions; upwards of two hundred thousand Greeks live unmolested within the walls of Constantinople; the mufti himself nominates the Greek patriarch, and presents him to the Emperor, and, at the same time, allows the residence of a Latin patriarch. The Sultan appoints Latin bishops for some of the Greek isles. The form used on this

occasion is as follows:[10] “I command such a one to go and reside as bishop in the Isle of Chios, according to the ancient custom and idle ceremonies of those people.” The Ottoman Empire swarms with Jacobins, Nestorians, Monothelites, Cophti, Christians of St. John, Guebres, and Banians; and the Turkish annals do not furnish us with one single instance of a rebellion occasioned by any of these different sects.

Go into India, Persia, and Tartary, and you will meet with the same toleration and the same tranquillity. Peter the Great encouraged all kinds of religions throughout his vast empire; trade and agriculture have been gainers by it, and no injury ever happened therefrom to the body politic.

We do not find that the Chinese government, during the course of four thousand years that it has existed, has ever adopted any other religion than that of the Noachides, which consists in the simple worship of one God; and yet it tolerates the superstitions of Fo, and that of a multitude of bonzes; which might be productive of dangerous consequences did not the wisdom of the tribunals keep them within proper bounds.

It is true that the great Yong-T-Chin, the most wise and magnanimous of all the emperors of China, drove the Jesuits out of his kingdom; but this was not because that prince himself was non-tolerant, but, on the contrary, because the Jesuits were so.

They themselves, in their letters, have given us the speech the emperor made to them on that occasion: “I know,” said he, “that your religion admits not of toleration; I know how you have behaved in the Manilas and in Japan; you deceived my father, but think not to deceive me in the same manner.” And if we read the whole of the conversation which he deigned to hold with them, we must confess him to be the wisest and most clement of all princes. How could he indeed, with any consistency, keep in his kingdom European philosophers, who, under the pretence of teaching the use of thermometers and eolipiles, had found means to debauch a prince of the blood? But what would this emperor have said had he read our histories, and had he been acquainted with the times of the League and the Gunpowder Plot?

It was sufficient for him to be informed of the outrageous and indecent disputes between those Jesuits, Dominicans, Capuchins, and secular priests who were sent as missionaries into his dominions from one extremity of the globe to preach the truth; instead of which they employed their time in mutually pronouncing damnation against one another. The emperor, then, did no more than send away a set of foreigners who were disturbers of the public peace. But with what infinite goodness did he dismiss them! and with what paternal care did he provide for their accommodation in their journey, and to prevent their meeting with any insult on their way! This very act of banishment might serve as an example of toleration and

[10] See Ricaut.

humanity. [11] The Japanese were the most tolerant of all nations; twelve different religions were peaceably established in their empire; when the Jesuits came, they made the thirteenth; and, in a very little time after their arrival, they would not suffer any other than their own. Everyone knows the consequence of these proceedings; a civil war, as calamitous as that of the League, soon spread destruction and carnage through the empire; till at length the Christian religion was itself swallowed up in the torrents of blood it had set aflowing, and the Japanese forever shut the entrance of their country against all foreigners, looking upon us as no better than savage beasts, such as those from which the English have happily cleared their island. Colbert, the minister, who knew the necessity we were in of the commodities of Japan, which wants nothing from us, labored in vain to settle a trade with that empire; he found those people inflexible.

Thus, then, everything on our continent shows us that we ought neither to preach nor to exercise non-toleration.

Let us now cast our eyes on the other hemisphere. Behold Carolina! whose laws were framed by the wise Locke; there every master of a family, who has only seven souls under his roof, may establish what religion he pleases, provided all those seven persons concur with him therein; and yet this great indulgence has not, hitherto, been the occasion of any disorders. God forbid that I should mention this as an example to every master of a family to set up a particular worship in his house; I have only introduced it to show that the utmost lengths to which toleration can be carried have never yet given rise even to the slightest dissensions.

And what shall we say of those pacific primitive Christians, who have, by way of derision, been called Quakers; and who, though some of their customs may perhaps be ridiculous, are yet remarkable for the virtue and sobriety of their lives, and for having in vain endeavored to preach peace and good-will to the rest of mankind? There are at least a hundred thousand of them in Pennsylvania; discord and controversy are unknown in that happy spot where they have settled; the very name of their principal city, Philadelphia, is a continual memento to them that all men are brethren, and is at once an example and reproach to those nations which have not yet adopted toleration.

To conclude, toleration has never yet excited civil wars, whereas its opposite has filled the earth with slaughter and desolation. Let any one then judge which of the two is more entitled to our esteem, or which we should applaud; the mother who would deliver her son into the hand of the executioner, or she who would resign all right to him to save his life.

In all that I have said I have had only the interest of nations in view, and, as I pay all due respect to the doctrines of the Church, I have in this article only considered the physical and moral advantages of society. I therefore hope that every impartial

[11] See Kempfer, and all the accounts of Japan.

reader will properly weigh these truths, that he will view them in their proper light, and rectify what may be amiss. Those who read with attention, and reciprocally communicate their thoughts, will always have the start of the author.[12]

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[12] M. de la Bourdonnaie, intendant of Rouen, says that the manufacture of hats at Caudebec and Neufchâtel has greatly fallen off since the refugees left that county. M. Foucaut, intendant of Caen, says that trade in general has declined through the whole district; and M. de Maupeou, intendant of Poitiers, that the manufacture of druggets is quite lost. M. de Bezons complains that there is now hardly any trade stirring in Clérac and Nérac. M. Miroménil, intendant of Touraine, says that the trade of Tours has diminished near ten millions per annum, and all this through the persecution raised in that part of the kingdom. (See the Memorials of the Intendants in the year 1698.) To this, if we add the number of land and sea officers and common sailors who have been forced to engage in foreign services, frequently with fatal consequences to their own country, we shall then see whether or no persecution has been fatal to the state.
We will not here presume to offer any hints to those ministers whose conduct and capacity are sufficiently known, and whose greatness of soul and nobleness of sentiment do honor to their illustrious birth; they will of themselves readily perceive that the restoration of our marine will require some indulgence at least to be shown to the inhabitants of our sea-coasts.

CHAPTER 5. IN WHAT CASES TOLERATION MAY BE ADMITTED

Let me for once suppose that a minister equally noble and discerning, that a prelate equally wise and humane, or a prince who is sensible that his interest consists in the increased number of his subjects, and his glory in their happiness, may deign to cast their eyes on this random and defective production. In this case his own consummate knowledge will naturally lead him to ask himself, “What hazard shall I run by seeing the land beautiful and enriched by a greater number of industrious laborers, the aids augmented, and the state rendered more flourishing?”

Germany, by this time, would have been a desert, covered with the unburied bodies of many different sects, slaughtered by one another, had not the Peace of Westphalia happily procured a liberty of conscience.

We have Jews in Bordeaux, in Mentz, and in Alsace; we have Lutherans, Molinists, and Jansenists amongst us; can we not then admit Protestants likewise under proper restrictions, nearly like those under which the Roman Catholics are permitted in England? The greater the number of different sects, the less danger is to be apprehended from any one in particular; they become weaker in proportion as they are more numerous, and are easily kept in subjection by those just laws which prohibit riotous assemblies, mutual insults, and seditions, and which the legislative power will always properly support in their full vigor.

We know that there are several heads of families, who have acquired great fortunes in foreign countries, who would be glad to return to their native country. These require only the protection of the law of nature, to have their marriages remain valid and their children secured in the enjoyment of their present property, and the right of succeeding to the inheritance of their fathers, together with protection for their persons. They ask no public places of worship; they aim not at the possession of civil employment, nor do they aspire to dignities either in Church or State; for no Roman Catholics can enjoy any of these, either in England or in any other Protestant country.[13] In this case, therefore, there is no occasion for granting great privileges, or delivering strongholds into the hands of a faction, but only to suffer a quiet set of people to breathe their native air; to soften the rigor of some edicts, which in former times might perhaps have been necessary, but at present are no longer so. It is not for us to direct the ministry what it has to do; it is sufficient if we presume to plead the cause of an unfortunate and distressed people.

Many and easy are the methods to render these people useful to the state, and to prevent them from ever becoming dangerous; the wisdom of the legislature

[13] These disabilities no longer exist in Protestant countries.

supported by the military force, will certainly find out these methods, which other nations have employed with so much success.

It is certain that there is still a number of enthusiasts among the lower kind of Calvinists; but, on the other hand, it is no less certain that there is still a greater number among the lower kind of bigoted Roman Catholics. The dregs of the madmen of St. Médard are passed over unnoticed in the nation, while the greatest pains are taken to exterminate the Calvinist prophets. The most certain means to lessen the number of the mad of both sorts, if any still remain, is to leave them entirely to the care of reason, which will infallibly enlighten the understanding in the long run, though she may be slow in her operations. Reason goes mildly to work, she persuades with humanity, she inspires mutual indulgence and forbearance, she stifles the voice of discord, establishes the rule of virtue and sobriety, and disposes those to pay a ready obedience to the laws who might start from the hand of power when exerted to enforce them. Besides, are we to hold for nothing that contempt and ridicule which enthusiasm everywhere meets with in the present enlightened age from persons of rank and education? This very contempt is the most powerful barrier that can be opposed to the extravagancies of all sectaries. Past times are as though they never had been. We should always direct our views from the point where we ourselves at present are, and from that to which other nations have attained.

There has been a time in which it was thought a duty to issue edicts against all such as taught a doctrine contrary to the categories of Aristotle, or who opposed the abhorrence of a vacuum, quiddities, or the whole or the part of a thing. There are above a hundred volumes in Europe containing the writings of civilians against magic, and the manner of distinguishing real sorcerers from pretended ones. The excommunication of grasshoppers and other insects hurtful to the fruits of the earth was formerly much in use, and is still to be found in several rituals; that custom is now laid aside, and Aristotle, with his sorcerers, and the grasshoppers are left to themselves. Innumerable are the examples of these grave follies, which formerly were deemed of great importance; others have succeeded from time to time, but as soon as they have had their effect, and people begin to grow weary of them, they pass away and are no more heard of. If any one were, at present, to take it into his head to turn Eutychian, Nestorian, or Manichæan, what would be the consequence? We should laugh at him in the same manner as at a person who should appear dressed after the ancient fashion, with a great ruff and slashed sleeves.

The first thing that opened the eyes of our nation was when the Jesuits Letellier and Doucin drew up the bull Unigenitus, and sent it to the Court of Rome, imagining they lived still in those times of ignorance in which people adopted, without examination, the most absurd assertions. They even dared to proscribe a proposition, which is universally true in all cases and in all times, “that the dread of an unjust excommunication ought not to hinder any one from doing his duty.” This was, in fact, proscribing reason, the liberties of the Gallican church, and the very foundation of all morality; it was saying to mankind: “God commands you never to do your duty when

you are apprehensive of suffering any injustice.” Never was so gross an insult offered to common sense, and yet this never occurred to these correspondents of the Church of Rome. Nay, they even persuaded that court that this bull was necessary, that the nation desired it. Accordingly it was signed, sealed, and sent back to France; and every one knows the consequences; assuredly, had they been foreseen, this bull would have been mitigated. Very warm disputes ensued upon it; but, however, by the great prudence and goodness of the king, they were at length appeased.

It is much the same with regard to most of those points in which the Protestants and we at present differ; some of them are of little or no consequence; others again are more serious; but even in these latter, the rage of disputation is so far subsided that the Protestants nowadays no longer preach upon controversial points in any of their churches.

Let us then seize this period of disgust or satiety for such matters, or, rather, indeed, of the prevalence of reason, as an epoch for restoring the public tranquillity, of which it seems to be a pleasing earnest. Controversy, that epidemical malady, is now in its decline, and requires nothing more than a gentle regimen. In a word, it is the interest of the state that these wandering sects, who have so long lived as aliens to their father’s house, on their returning in a submissive and peaceable manner, should meet with a favorable reception; humanity seems to demand this, reason advises it, and good policy can have nothing to apprehend from it.

CHAPTER 6. IF NON-TOLERATION IS AGREEABLE TO THE LAW OF NATURE AND OF SOCIETY

The law of nature is that which nature points out to all mankind. You have brought up a child, that child owes you a respect as its parent, and gratitude as its benefactor. You have a right over the productions of the earth which you have raised by the labor of your own hands; you have given and received a promise; that promise ought to be kept.

The law of society can have no other foundation in any case than on the law of nature. “Do not that to another which thou wouldst not he should do unto thee,” is the great and universal principle of both throughout the earth; now, agreeably to this principle, can one man say to another: “Believe that which I believe, and which thou thyself canst not believe, or thou shalt die?” And yet this is what is every day said in Portugal, in Spain, and in Goa. In some other countries, indeed, they now content themselves with saying, “Believe as I do, or I will hold thee in abhorrence; believe like me, or I will do thee all the evil I can; wretch, thou art not of my religion, and therefore thou hast no religion at all, and oughtest to be held in execration by thy neighbors, thy city, and thy province.”

If the law of society directs such a conduct, the Japanese ought then to hold the Chinese in detestation; the latter the Siamese, who should persecute the inhabitants of the Ganges; and they fall upon those of India; the Mogul should put to death the first Malabar he found in his kingdom; the Malabar should poniard the Persian; the Persian massacre the Turk; and, all together, should fall upon us Christians, who have so many ages been cutting one another’s throats.

The law of persecution then is equally absurd and barbarous; it is the law of tigers; nay, it is even still more savage, for tigers destroy only for the sake of food, whereas we have butchered one another on account of a sentence or a paragraph.

CHAPTER 7. IF NON-TOLERATION WAS KNOWN AMONG THE GREEKS

The several nations with which history has made us in part acquainted, all considered their different religions as ties by which they were united; it was the association of human kind. There was a kind of law of hospitality among the gods, the same as among men. If a stranger arrived in any town, the first thing he did was to pay his adoration to the gods of the country, even though they were the gods of his enemies. The Trojans offered up prayers even to those gods who fought for the Greeks.

Alexander made a journey into the deserts of Libya, purposely to consult the god Ammon, to whom the Greeks gave the name of Zeus and the Latins that of Jupiter, though both countries had their Jupiter and their Zeus among themselves. When they sat down before any town or city, they offered up sacrifices and prayers to the gods of that city or town, to render them propitious to their undertaking. Thus, even in the midst of war, religion united mankind; and though it might sometimes prompt them to exercise the most inhuman cruelties, at other times it frequently softened their fury.

I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that not one of all the civilized nations of antiquity ever laid a restraint upon liberty of thinking. They all had a particular religion; but they seem to have acted in this respect toward men in the same manner as they did toward their gods; they all acknowledged one Supreme Being, though they associated him with an infinite number of inferior deities; in like manner, though they had but one faith, yet they admitted a multitude of particular systems.

The Greeks, for example, though a very religious people, were not offended with the Epicureans, who denied Providence and the existence of the soul, not to mention divers other sects, whose tenets were all of them repugnant to the pure ideas we ought to entertain of a Creator, and yet were all of them tolerated.

Socrates, who came the nearest to the knowledge of the true God, is said to have suffered on that account, and died a martyr to the Deity; he was the only one whom the Greeks ever put to death on account of opinion. If this was really the cause of his being condemned, it does very little honor to persecution, since he was put to death for being the only one who gave true glory to God, whilst those who taught notions the most unworthy of the Deity were held in high honor; therefore, I think, the enemies of toleration should be cautious how they lay a stress upon the infamous example of his judges.

Moreover, it is evident from history that he fell a victim to the revenge of an enraged party. He had made himself many inveterate enemies among the sophists, orators, and poets, who taught in the public schools, and even among the preceptors who

had the care of the children of distinction. He himself acknowledges in his discourse handed down to us by Plato, that he went from house to house to convince these preceptors that they were a set of ignorant fellows, a conduct certainly unworthy of one who had been declared by an oracle the wisest of mankind. A priest and one of the members of the Areopagus were let loose upon him, who accused him I cannot precisely say of what, as his apology to me seems very vague; from which, however, we learn in general that he was charged with inspiring the youth of the nation with notions contrary to the religion and government of the country, an accusation which the slanderers of all times and places have constantly made use of; but a court of justice requires positive facts, and that the charge should be circumstantial and well supported, none of which are to be found in the proceedings against Socrates. All we know is that he had at first two hundred and twenty voices for him; therefore there must have been two hundred and twenty out of the five hundred judges who were philosophers, a great many more, I believe, than are to be found anywhere else. At length, however, the majority were for the hemlock potion. But here let us not forget, that when the Athenians came to their reason, they held both his accusers and judges in detestation; made Melitus, who had been the principal author of the sentence pronounced against him, pay for that act of injustice with his life; banished all the others concerned in it, and erected a temple to Socrates. Never was philosophy so nobly avenged, so highly honored. This affair of Socrates then is, in fact, the most powerful argument that can be alleged against persecution. The Athenians had an altar dedicated to the strange gods, gods they could never know. What stronger proof then can there be, not only of their extreme indulgence towards all nations, but even of their respect for the religion of those nations?

A very worthy person, who is neither an enemy to reason, learning, or probity, nor to his country, in undertaking to justify the affair of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, quotes the war of the Phocians, by them called the sacred war, as if that war had been entered into on the score of religion, or a particular point in divinity, whereas it is well known that it was caused by a dispute about a particular spot of ground, the constant cause of all wars. A few corn-grounds can certainly never be a symbol of belief; it is as certain that none of the Greek cities ever made war on one another for the sake of opinion. After all, what would this modest and humane writer drive at? Would he have us undertake a sacred war!

CHAPTER 8. WHETHER THE ROMANS ENCOURAGED TOLERATION

Among the ancient Romans, from the days of Romulus to those in which the Christians began to dispute with the priests of the empire, we do not find a single instance of any person being persecuted on account of his sentiments. Cicero doubted everything, Lucretius denied everything, and yet neither the one nor the other underwent the least reproach from their fellow-citizens; nay, so far did this licence go, that Pliny, the naturalist, begins his book by denying the existence of a God, and saying, that if there be one, it must be the sun. Cicero, in speaking of hell, says: *Non est una tam excors quæ credat* ("There is not even an old woman so silly as to believe it"). Juvenal says: *Nec pueri credunt* ("Nor do the children believe it"). And the following maxim was publicly repeated in the Roman theatre: *Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil* ("Naught after death; even death itself is naught"). While we abhor these maxims, let us pardon them in a people who were never enlightened by the holy truths of the Gospel; and, while we own them to be false and impious, let us, however, confess that the Romans were great friends to toleration, seeing that such tenets never excited any commotions.

Deorum offensa diis curæ, was the grand principle of the senate and people of Rome, that illustrious nation employing their attention wholly to conquer, govern and civilize the universe. They were our legislators as well as our conquerors; and even Cæsar, who reduced us to his subjection, and gave us laws and games, never attempted to compel us to quit our Druids for him, though supreme pontiff of a nation whose subjects we were now become.

The Romans themselves did not profess all kinds of religion, therefore they did not give public sanction to all, but they permitted them. Under Numa nothing material was the object of their worship. They had neither statues nor pictures; in process of time, however, some were erected to the *Dii Majorum Gentium*, with which the Greeks brought them into acquaintance. That law in the twelve tables, *Deos peregrinos ne colunto*, was confined to the allowing no public worship to be paid, except to the superior and inferior deities, approved by the senate. The Egyptian goddess Isis had a temple in Rome at the time of Tiberius, who demolished it because its priests, having been bribed by Mundus, suffered him to lie with a lady called Paulina in the temple itself, under the name and form of the god Anubis. Indeed this story is to be found only in Josephus, who did not live at that time, and was moreover a credulous and exaggerating writer; and there is very little probability that in so enlightened an age as that of Tiberius, a lady of the first distinction in Rome could be so weak as to believe that a god cohabited with her.

But whether this anecdote be true or false, this one thing is certain, that the Egyptian idolatry was in the possession of a temple in Rome with the public consent. The

Jews had also lived as traders in that city ever since the Punic war; they had their synagogues there in the time of Augustus, and almost always continued to have them in the same manner as they now have in modern Rome. Can we desire a stronger instance that the Romans looked upon toleration as the most sacred of all the laws of nations?

We are told that as soon as the Christian religion began to make its appearance, its followers were persecuted by these very Romans who persecuted no one. This fact, however, appears to me to be evidently false, and I desire no better authority than that of St. Paul himself. In the Acts of the Apostles[14] we are told that St. Paul, being accused by the Jews of attempting to overturn the Mosaic law by that of Jesus Christ, St. James proposed to him to shave his head and go into the temple with four Jews and purify himself with them, “That all men may know,” says he, “that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself dost keep the law of Moses.”

Accordingly, we find that St. Paul, though a Christian, submitted to perform these Jewish ceremonies for the space of seven days; but before the expiration of this time, the Jews of Asia, who knew him again, seeing him in the temple, not only with Jews but Gentiles also, cried out that he had polluted the holy place, and laid hands upon him, drew him out of the temple, and carried him before the Governor Felix; they afterwards accused him at the judgment-seat of Festus, whither the Jews came in crowds demanding his death. But Festus answered them: “It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself.”[15]

These words of the Roman magistrate are the more remarkable as he appears to have been no favorer of St. Paul, but rather to have held him in contempt, for, imposed upon by the false lights of his own reason, he took him for a person beside himself; nay, he expressly says to him, “Much learning hath made thee mad.”[16] Festus then was entirely guided by the equity of the Roman law in taking under his protection a stranger for whom he could have no regard.

Here then we have the word of God itself declaring that the Romans were a just people, and no persecutors. Besides, it was not the Romans who laid violent hands on St. Paul, but the Jews. St. James, the brother of Jesus, was stoned to death by order of a Sadducee Jew, and not by that of a Roman judge. It was the Jews alone who put St. Stephen to death;[17] and though St. Paul held the clothes of those who stoned him, he certainly did not act then as a Roman citizen.

[14] Chap. xxi., xxii.
[15] Acts xxv.
[16] Acts xxvi.
[17] Though the power of life and death in criminal matters had been taken from the Jews after the banishment of Archelaus into the country of the Allobroges and that Judæa had been governed as a province, nevertheless the Romans frequently winked at the exertion of a judicial power by these

The primitive Christians had certainly no cause of complaint against the Romans; the Jews, from whom they at that time began to separate themselves, were their only enemies. Every one knows the implacable hatred all sectaries bore to those who quit their sect. There doubtless were several tumults in the synagogues in Rome. Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, has these words, *Judæos impulsore Christo assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*. He is wrong in saying that it was at the instigation of Christ they raised commotions in Rome; but he could not be acquainted with all the circumstances relating to a people who were held in such contempt in Rome as the Jews were; and, however mistaken he may have been in this particular, yet he is right as to the occasion of these commotions. Suetonius wrote in the reign of Adrian in the second century, when the Christians were not distinguished from the Jews by the Romans; therefore this passage of Suetonius is a proof that the Romans, so far from oppressing the primitive Christians, chastised the Jews who persecuted them, being desirous that the Jewish synagogue in Rome should show the same indulgence to its dissenting brethren as it received itself from the Roman Senate; and we find from Dion Cassius and Ulpian, that the Jews who were thus banished from Rome returned soon after, and even attained to several honors and dignities, notwithstanding the laws which excluded them therefrom.[18] Can it be believed, that after the destruction of Jerusalem, the emperors would have loaded the Jews with their favors, and have persecuted and put to death the Christians, whom they looked upon as a sect of the Jews?

Nero is said to have been a great persecutor of the Christians. But Tacitus tells us that they were accused of having set fire to the city of Rome, and were thereupon given up to the resentment of the populace. But had religion anything to do with this charge? No, certainly. We might as well say that the Chinese, whom the Dutch murdered a few years ago in Batavia, were slaughtered on account of their religion. And nothing but a strong desire to deceive ourselves can possibly make us attribute to persecution the sufferings of a few half-Jews and half-Christians under Nero.[19]

people on any particular occasion that related merely to those of their own sect, such as, for instance, when in any sudden tumult they out of zeal stoned to death the person whom they thought guilty of blasphemy.

[18] Ulpianus I. tit. II. *Eis qui judaicam superstitionem sequuntur, honores adipisci permiserunt, &c.*

[19] Tacitus' words are: *Quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat*.

It is hardly probable that the name of Christian was already known in Rome. Tacitus wrote in the reigns of the Emperors Vespasian and Domitian, and he speaks of the Christians in the manner that was customary in his time. And here I must venture to assert that the words *Odio humani generis convicti*, may equally well be rendered agreeably to the style of this writer, *Convicted of being hated by mankind*, as *Convicted of hating all mankind*.

And indeed, what was the employment of these first missionaries in Rome? They labored to gain a few proselytes by preaching a pure and simple moral doctrine; the humility of their hearts, and the modesty of their manners were equal to the lowliness of their condition and circumstances. Having been so lately separated from the Jews, they were hardly known in the world as a different sect; how then could they be hated by, or convicted of hating all mankind, to whom they were in a manner unknown?

The Roman Catholics have been accused as the incendiaries of the city of London in the year 1666, but not till they had first occasioned civil wars on account of religion; and after several of that faith, though unworthy to be so, had been legally convicted of the Gunpowder Plot.

But surely the case of the primitive Christians in the time of Nero was very different. It is no easy matter to clear up the obscurities of history. Even Tacitus himself says nothing that can afford a reason to suspect Nero of having set fire to Rome; and we might, with a greater appearance of probability, charge Charles II. with having lighted up the flames that laid London in ashes, to avenge the blood of his father, that had been so lately shed upon the scaffold to satisfy a rebellious people who thirsted for that blood. Charles had at least some excuse for such an action, whereas Nero had neither excuse, pretence, nor interest for the deed attributed to him. Reports of this kind have been common in every country among the populace, and even our own times have furnished us with some equally false and ridiculous.

Tacitus, who was so well acquainted with the disposition of princes, could not have been a stranger to that of the common people, who are ever vain, inconstant, and violent in the opinions they adopt, incapable of discerning truth from falsehood, and ready to believe, assert, and forget everything.

Philo says that “Sejanus persecuted the Jews under Tiberius, but that after the death of Sejanus, the emperor reinstated them in all their privileges,” one of which was, that of being denizens of Rome, notwithstanding the contempt they were held in by the Romans. As such, they had a share in the distribution of corn, and whenever such distribution happened to be made on the day that was their Sabbath, the portion allotted them was put by till the next day; this indulgence might probably be granted them in favor of the great sums of money with which they furnished the state; for they have purchased toleration in every country at a pretty high rate, though, it must be confessed, that they have soon found means to reimburse themselves.

This passage of Philo’s clearly explains one in Tacitus, where he says that “Four thousand Jews or Egyptians were banished to Sardinia, where, if they had all perished, through the badness of the climate, it would have been no great loss.” *Vile damnum.*

Before I close this note, I shall observe that Philo speaks of Tiberius as a wise and just prince. I am very ready to believe that he was so, only where the being such was agreeable to his interest; but the good character given him here by Philo makes me at the same time greatly suspect the truth of those terrible crimes with which Tacitus and Suetonius reproach him. Nor can I think it likely that an infirm old man of seventy would have retired into the island of Caprera to indulge himself in the uninterrupted exercise of a refined debauchery, which appears to be hardly natural, and was, even in those days of licentiousness, unknown to the most abandoned of the Roman youth. Neither Tacitus nor Suetonius was acquainted with that emperor; but took these stories upon the credit of vulgar reports; Octavius and Tiberius Cæsar, and their successors, had been detested for reigning over a free people without their consent. All historians have taken a delight in bespattering their characters, and the world has taken them at their words for want of authentic memorials or chronicles in those times. Besides, as these writers do not quote any authority for what they advance, who could contradict them? They blackened whom they pleased, and wantonly directed the judgment of posterity. The wise and impartial reader will, however, readily perceive how far the veracity of historians is to be depended on, and what degree of credit is due to public facts attested by authors of reputation, born in a learned and enlightened nation, as well as what bounds to set to our belief of anecdotes, when related by these same authors, without any authority to support them.

CHAPTER 9. MARTYRS

Several Christians afterwards suffered martyrdom; it is not easy to say on what particular account they were condemned, but I can venture to assert that none suffered under the first Cæsars merely on the account of religion, for they tolerated all beliefs; therefore, why should they seek out and persecute an obscure people, who had a worship peculiar to themselves, at the time they licensed all others?

The Emperors Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Decius were not barbarians; how then can we imagine that they would have deprived the Christians alone of that liberty with which they indulged every other nation, or that they would even have troubled them for having concealed mysteries, while the worshippers of Isis, Mithra, and the Goddess of Assyria, whose rites were all of them equally unknown to the Romans, were suffered to perform them without hindrance? Certainly, the persecutions the Christians suffered must have arisen from other causes, and from some private pique, enforced by reasons of state.

For instance, when St. Laurence refused to deliver to Cornelius Secularius, the Roman prefect, the money belonging to the Christians which he had in his custody, was it not very natural for the prefect and the emperor to be incensed at this refusal? They did not know that St. Laurence had distributed this money among the poor, in acts of charity and benevolence; therefore they considered him only as a refractory person, and punished him accordingly.[20]

Again, let us consider the martyrdom of St. Polyeuctes. Can he be said to have suffered on account of religion only? He enters a temple, where the people are employed in offering thanksgivings to their gods on account of the victory gained by the Emperor Decius; he insults the priests and overturns and breaks in pieces the altar and statues. Is there a country in the world where so gross an insult would have been passed over? The Christian who publicly tore the edict of the Emperor Diocletian, and by that act brought on the great persecution against his brethren in the two last years of this prince's reign, had not, surely, a zeal according to knowledge, but was the unhappy cause of all the disasters that befell his party. This inconsiderate zeal, which was often breaking forth, and was condemned even by

[20] We most certainly have a proper deference for whatever the Holy Church has made the objects of our reverence; accordingly, we invoke the blessed martyrs; but at the same time that we pay St. Laurence all due respect, may we not be permitted to doubt that St. Sixtus said to him: "You will follow me in three days." That, during this short interval, the prefect of Rome made him demand a sum of money of the Christians; that Laurence had time to assemble all the poor people in that city; that he walked before the prefect, to show him the place where they were assembled; that he was afterwards tried and condemned to the torture; that the prefect ordered the smith to make a gridiron large enough to broil a man upon; that the principal magistrate of Rome assisted in person at this strange execution; and lastly that St. Laurence, while upon the gridiron, called out to him, "I am done enough on this side, let them turn me on the other, if you have a mind to eat me." This same gridiron seems to have very little of the Roman genius in it; and besides, how happens it that we do not find a word of this story in any of the heathen writers?

several of the Fathers of the Church, was probably the occasion of all those persecutions we read of.

Certainly, I would not make a comparison between the first sacramentarians and the primitive Christians, as error should never be ranked in the same class with truth, but it is well known that Farrel, the predecessor of Calvin, did the very same thing at Arles which St. Polyeuctes had done before him in Armenia. The townsmen were carrying the statue of St. Anthony, the hermit, in procession through the streets; Farrel and some of his followers in a fit of zeal fell upon the monks who were carrying the image, beat them, made them take to their heels, and, having seized upon St. Anthony, threw him into the river. Assuredly Farrel deserved death for this flagrant outrage upon the public peace, but he had the good luck to escape by flight. Now, had he only told those monks in the open streets that he did not believe that a raven had brought half a loaf to St. Anthony, nor that this hermit had had conversation with centaurs and satyrs, he would have deserved a severe reprimand for troubling the public peace; but if the night after the procession he had quietly examined the story in his own room, no one could have found any fault with him for it.

But, indeed, can we suppose that the Romans, after permitting the infamous Antinous to be ranked among their demi-gods, would have massacred and thrown to wild beasts those against whom they had no other cause of reproach than having peaceably worshipped a just Deity? Or would those very Romans, who worshipped a supreme and all-powerful God,[21] master of all the subordinate deities, and distinguished by the title of *Deus optimus maximus*, would they, I say, have persecuted such who professed to worship only one God?

There appears little reason to believe that there ever was an inquisition instituted against the Christians under the Roman emperors; I mean, that they were ever

[21] We have only to open Virgil to be convinced that the Romans acknowledged one Supreme Being, the lord and master of all other heavenly beings.

O! quis res hominumque deumque
Æternis regis imperiis, & fulmine terres,
O pater, o hominum divumque æterna potestas, &c.

And Horace expresses himself still more strongly:

Unde nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quidquam simile, aut secundum.

In those mysteries into which almost all the Roman youths were initiated, nothing else was sung but the unity of God. See the noble hymn of Orpheus, and the letter of Maximus of Modarum to St. Augustine, in which he says that “None but fools can possibly deny a Supreme Being.” Longinus, who was a heathen, writes also to St. Augustine that “God is one, incomprehensible, ineffable.” Even Lactantius, who certainly cannot be charged with being too indulgent, acknowledges in his fifth book that “The Romans subjected all the other deities to the one supreme God;” *illos subjecit & mancipat Deo*. Tertullian also in his Apology confesses that “The whole empire acknowledged one God, ruler of the world, and infinite in power and majesty:” *Principem mundi perfectæ potentiæ & majestatis*. Again, if we look into Plato, who taught Cicero his philosophy, we shall there find him thus express himself: “There is but one God, whom we all ought to love and adore, and labor to resemble Him in integrity and holiness.” Epictetus in a dungeon, and Mark Antoninus on a throne, tell us the same in a hundred different passages of their writings.

judicially examined on the subject of their faith; neither do we find that Jew, Syrian, Egyptian bards, Druids, or philosophers were ever troubled on this account. The primitive martyrs then were men who opposed the worship of false gods. But, however wise or pious they might be in rejecting the belief of such absurd fictions, if, not content with worshipping the true God in spirit and in truth, they offered a violent and public outrage to the received religion of the government under which they lived, however absurd that religion might be, impartiality obliges us to confess that they themselves were the first persecutors.

Tertullian, in his Apology,[22] says that the Christians were looked upon as a turbulent and seditious sect. This accusation is doubtless unjust; but it serves to prove that the civil power did not set itself against the Christians purely on account of their religion. In another place,[23] he says that the Christians refused to adorn the doors of their houses with laurel branches on the days of public rejoicing for the victories of the emperors. Now this blamable particularity might not, without some reason, be taken for disaffection to the government.

The first judicial act of severity we find exercised against the Christians was that of Domitian; but this extended only to banishment, which did not last above a year, for, says the author above quoted, *Facile cœptum repressit restitutis quos ipse relegaverat*. Lactantius, so remarkable for his passionate and pompous style, acknowledges that from the time of Domitian to that of Decius the Church continued in a peaceable and flourishing condition. This long tranquillity, says he,[24] was interrupted by that execrable animal Decius, who began to oppress the Church: *Post multos annos extitit execrabile animal Decius qui vexaret ecclesiam*.

I shall not here enter into a discussion of the opinion of the learned Mr. Dodwell concerning the small number of martyrs; but if the Romans had been such violent persecutors of the Christian religion, if their senate had condemned so many of its innocent votaries to perish by the most unheard-of tortures, plunging them alive in boiling oil, and exposing their wives and daughters naked to the wild beasts in the circus, how happened it that they suffered all the first bishops of Rome to live unmolested? St. Ireneus reckons only one martyr among all these bishops, namely, Telesphorus, who suffered in the year 139 of our vulgar era; nor have we any positive proof of this Telesphorus being put to death. Zephirinus governed the flock in Rome for eighteen years successively, and died peaceably in the year 219. It is true that in the ancient martyrologies we find almost all the first popes ranked as martyrs, but the word martyr is there taken only in its original and true signification, which is a witness and not a sufferer.

[22] Chap. 39.
[23] Chap. 35.
[24] Chap. iii.

Moreover, we can hardly reconcile this rage of persecution with the liberty granted the Christians, of assembling no less than fifty-six councils in the course of the first three centuries, as is acknowledged by all ecclesiastical writers.

That there were persecutions, is doubtless; but if they had been as violent as represented, it is hardly probable that Tertullian, who wrote with so much energy against the established religion, would have been suffered to die peaceably in his bed. It is certain that none of the emperors ever read his “Apology,” as an obscure work composed in Africa can hardly be supposed to have come into the hands of the governors of the world; but then, it might have been shown to their proconsuls in Africa, and have drawn down their resentment upon the author; nevertheless, we do not find that he suffered martyrdom.

Origen taught the Christian religion publicly in Alexandria, and yet was not put to death for it. And this very Origen himself, who spoke with so much freedom both to the heathens and the Christians, and who, while he taught Jesus to the one, denied the triple Godhead to the other, expressly acknowledges, in his third book against Celsus, that “There were very few who suffered martyrdom, and those at a great distance of time from one another; notwithstanding,” says he, “that the Christians leave nothing undone to make their religion generally embraced, running from city to city, and from town to town, to make converts.”

It must be confessed that these continual peregrinations might readily give cause to the priests, who were their enemies, to accuse them of a design to raise disturbances; and yet we find that these missions were tolerated even among the Egyptians, who have ever been a turbulent, factious, and mean people, and who tore a Roman to death for having killed a cat; in a word, a nation at all times contemptible, whatever may have been said to the contrary by the admirers of pyramids.[25]

[25] This assertion requires to be proved. It cannot be denied that from the time that history succeeded to fiction, the Egyptians have constantly appeared to be a people as dastardly as they were superstitious. Cambyses made the conquest of their country in a single battle; Alexander gave them laws without striking a stroke, or without one of their cities daring to wait a siege. The Ptolemies subdued them with as little trouble, nor did Octavius and Augustus Cæsar find more difficulty in bringing them under their obedience. Omar overran all Egypt in one single campaign; the Mamelukes, who inhabited Colchis and the regions of Mount Caucasus, became their masters afterwards; and it was these people, and not the Egyptians, who defeated the army of St. Louis, and took that king prisoner. At length the Mamelukes having, in process of time, become Egyptians, that is to say, effeminate, cowardly, lazy, and dissipated, like the original natives of the climate, they were in three months’ time brought under the yoke of Selim I., who caused their Soldan to be hanged, and made their kingdom a province of the Turkish Empire, and such it will remain till other barbarians may hereafter make themselves masters of it.
Herodotus relates that in the fabulous ages a king of Egypt called Sesostris left his country in order to go and make the conquest of the world; it is evident that such a design could only be worthy of a Don Quixote; and not to mention that the name Sesostris is not Egyptian, we may rank this event, like many others of the same date, among the romances and fairy tales. Nothing is more common among a conquered people than to tell strange stories of their former grandeur, just as, in some countries, certain wretched families, in want of the common necessaries of life, pride themselves upon being descended from ancient sovereigns. The Egyptian priests told Herodotus that this king, whom he

What person could do more to call down upon him the resentment of both ecclesiastical and civil power than St. Gregory Thaumaturgos, the disciple of Origen? This same St. Gregory had a vision during the night-time, in which an old man appeared to him sent from God, accompanied by a woman shining with glory; the first of these was St. John the Evangelist, and the other the Holy Virgin. St. John dictated to him a creed, which Gregory afterwards went about to preach. In his way he passed through Neo-Cæsarea, where the rain obliged him to stay all night, and he took up his lodging near a temple famous for its oracles. Here he made several signs of the cross. The high priest coming the next morning into the temple was surprised to find that the oracle did not give its answer as usual, upon which he invoked the spirits of the place, who appearing, told him that they could no longer inhabit that mansion, as St. Gregory had passed a night there and had made signs of the cross, upon which the high priest caused Gregory to be seized, who gave him to understand that he could drive out or cause to enter the familiar spirits wherever he pleased. “If so,” said the high priest, “pray send them back here again.” Then St. Gregory, tearing a leaf from a little book he held in his hand, wrote these words upon it: “Gregory to Satan: I command thee to enter again into this temple.” The paper

called Sesostris, went on an expedition to conquer Colchis, which is much the same as if we were to say that a king of France set out from Touraine to conquer Norway.

It avails not that these stories are found repeated in a thousand different writers; it makes them not a whit more probable; it is much more natural to suppose that the fierce and athletic inhabitants of Mount Caucasus, of Colchis, and the other parts of Scythia, who so often made incursions upon and ravaged Asia, might have penetrated as far as Egypt; and although the priests of Colchis might afterwards have carried back with them the form of circumcision, yet that is no kind of proof that they were ever conquered by the Egyptians. Diodorus Siculus tells us that all the kings who were conquered by Sesostris came every year from their own kingdoms to bring him their respective tributes, when Sesostris made them draw the chariot in which he went in triumph to the temples of his gods. These old women’s stories we see every day gravely copied by other writers; it must be confessed that these kings were very complaisant, to come every year so far to be made hackney horses of.

As to their pyramids, and other monuments of antiquity, they prove nothing but the pride and bad taste of the Egyptian princes, and the wretched slavery of a weak people, who employed their strength, which was their only support, in pleasing the barbarous ostentation of their masters. The polity of these people, even in those times which are so much cried up, appears to have been both absurd and tyrannical; they pretended that the whole universe belonged to their monarchy. It well became such an abject race to set up for conquerors of the world!

The profound learning which we find attributed to the Egyptian priests is also one of the most ridiculous absurdities in ancient history, that is to say, in fable. People who pretended that in a revolution of eleven thousand years the sun had risen twice in the west and set twice in the east in beginning his course anew were doubtless curious astronomers. The religion of these priests, who governed the state, was inferior even to that of the most savage people of America; every one knows that crocodiles, monkeys, cats, and onions were the objects of their adoration; and there is not perhaps in the world so absurd a worship, excepting that of the Great Lama.

Their arts were as mean as their religion; there is not one ancient Egyptian statue fit to be seen; and whatever they had amongst them of any merit came from Alexandria in the times of the Ptolemies and Cæsars and was the work of Grecian artists; nay, they were even obliged to send to Greece for masters to teach them geometry.

The illustrious Bossuet, in his discourse upon universal history, dedicated to the son of Louis the Fourteenth, runs wild in his encomiums upon the merits of the Egyptians; this may dazzle the understanding of a young prince, but will never satisfy men of learning. This production is a very fine piece of eloquence, but a historian should be more of the philosopher than the orator. The reflections here offered concerning the Egyptians are merely conjectural; for by what other name can we call anything that is said concerning antiquity?

being laid upon the altar, the demons, in obedience to the saint's mandate, gave their oracles that day as usual, after which they remained silent.

This story is related by St. Gregory of Nyssa in his life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgos. Certainly, the idolatrous priests had great reason to be offended with St. Gregory, and might have delivered him over to the secular power as one who was their greatest enemy, and yet we do not find that they offered him any hurt.

The history of St. Cyprian informs us that he was the first bishop of Carthage who suffered martyrdom; this was A. D. 258, consequently no bishop of Carthage had been put to death on account of religion for a great length of time. The history of this saint does not inform us what charge was brought against him, who were his enemies, or how he incurred the displeasure of the proconsul of Africa. We find St. Cyprian thus writing to Cornelius, bishop of Rome: "There has been a tumult of the people lately at Carthage, in which it was twice proposed to throw me to the lions." It might possibly happen that the blind resentment of the people of Carthage did at length cause Cyprian to be put to death, for, certainly, he was never condemned to suffer for his religion by the Emperor Gallus, who lived at so great a distance, and, moreover, permitted Cornelius to exercise his episcopal function under his very eye.

So many and various are the hidden causes that are frequently blended with the apparent one, in the persecution of an individual, that it is hardly possible for posterity to discover the true source of the misfortunes that befell even the most considerable personages, much less that of the sufferings of a private person, hardly known to any but those of his own sect.

And here let it be observed that neither St. Gregory Thaumaturgos nor St. Denis, bishop of Alexandria, who were both contemporaries of St. Cyprian, suffered the slightest persecution. How then happened it that, being certainly as well known as the bishop of Carthage, they were suffered to live unmolested, while he was delivered over to punishment? May we not fairly infer that the one fell a victim to personal and powerful enemies, either in consequence of a malicious accusation, or from reasons of state, which frequently interfere in religious matters, while the other had the good fortune to escape the designs of wicked men?

We cannot, with any degree of probability, suppose that the charge of being a Christian was the only cause of St. Ignatius being put to death, under the just and merciful Trajan, since we find that several of his own religion were suffered to accompany and minister comfort to him on his way to Rome.[26] There had been

[26] Though we do not presume to doubt the suffering of St. Ignatius, yet, can any man of common understanding, who reads the account of his martyrdom, prevent some doubts from rising in his mind? The unknown author of this narrative says: "Trajan thought his glory would not be complete unless he subjected the God of the Christians to his obedience." What a thought! Was Trajan the kind of man who could desire to triumph over the gods? The emperor is said to have thus accosted Ignatius when he was brought before him: "Who art thou, unclean spirit?" It is very unlikely that an emperor would have discoursed with a prisoner, or have passed sentence upon him himself; it is not customary for sovereign princes to do so. Trajan might possibly cause Ignatius to be brought before

frequent seditions in Antioch, a city remarkable for the turbulent disposition of its inhabitants; here Ignatius privately acted as bishop over the Christians. It might happen that some of these disturbances, being maliciously imputed to the innocent Christians, had occasioned the government to take cognizance of them, and that the judge might have been mistaken, as it often happens.

St. Simeon, for example, was accused before King Sapor of being a spy to the Romans. The history of his martyrdom tells us that Sapor proposed to him to worship the sun, whereas every one knows that the Persians paid no divine honors to that planet, but only considered it as an emblem of the good principle, the Orasmades, or Sovereign Creator, whom they all adored.

Any one of the least tolerating spirit cannot help his indignation from rising against those writers who accused Diocletian of persecuting the Christians after his accession to the empire. Here we need only refer to Eusebius of Cæsarea, whose testimony certainly cannot be rejected. The favorite, the panegyrist of Constantine, and the declared enemy of the emperors his predecessors, is certainly entitled to our credit when he justifies those very emperors. The following are his own words:[27]

“The emperors had for a long time given the Christians great marks of their favor and benevolence; they had entrusted them with the care of whole provinces; many of them lived within the imperial palace; and some of the emperors even married Christian women; Diocletian, in particular, espoused Prisca, whose daughter was wife to Maximianus Galerius,” etc.

him, but he would not say to him, “Who art thou?” since he knew very well who he was. And as to the term “unclean spirit,” could it possibly have been used by such a man as Trajan? Is it not evident that this is an expression used in exorcising, and put by a Christian into the emperor’s mouth? Good heavens! what a style for Trajan.

Can we imagine that Ignatius answered him that he was called Theophorus, because he carried Jesus in his heart, and that Trajan entered into a long conversation with him concerning Christ? They make Trajan say at the end of this conference: “We command that Ignatius, who glories in carrying within him the crucified man, be thrown into prison loaded with chains,” etc. A sophist, a foe to Christianity, might call Jesus Christ *the crucified man*; but it is hardly probable that such a term would have been used in a decree. The punishment of the cross was so common among the Romans that they could not in their law style think of distinguishing by the words “crucified man” the object of the Christians’ worship; nor is it in this manner that the laws or the emperors pronounced sentence.

They afterwards make Ignatius write a long letter to the Christians of Rome. “I write to you,” says he, “though loaded with chains.” Certainly, if he was allowed to write to the Christians of Rome, those Christians were not considered as the objects of persecution; consequently, Trajan could have no design to subject their God to his obedience; or, on the other hand, if these Christians were actually liable to persecution, Ignatius was guilty of very great imprudence in regard to them, since this was betraying them to their enemies and making himself an informer against them.

Surely those who had the compiling of these facts should have had greater regard to probability and the circumstances of the times. The martyrdom of St. Polycarp also occasions some doubts. It is said that a voice called to him from heaven, saying: “Courage, Polycarp!” that this voice was distinctly heard by the Christians, but by no other of the attendants: we are told also, that when Polycarp was tied to the stake, and the fire lighted round him, the flames parted asunder, and a dove flew out from the midst of them; and that this saint, to whom the fire showed so much respect, exhaled an aromatic odor that perfumed the whole assembly; nevertheless, he whom the fire dared not to approach, could not resist the edge of the sword. Surely we may hope for pardon if we discover more piety than truth in these relations.

[27] Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. viii.

Let this authentic testimony make us cautious how we fall too readily into calumny; and from this let any impartial person judge, if the persecution raised by Galerius, after nineteen years of continued clemency and favor to the Christians, must not have been occasioned by some intrigues with which we are at present unacquainted.

From this also we may perceive the absurdity of that fabulous story of the Theban legion, said to have been all massacred for their religion. Can anything be more ridiculous than to make this legion be brought from Asia by the great St. Bernard? It is altogether impossible that this legion should have been sent for from Asia to quiet a tumult in Gaul, a year after that tumult was suppressed, and not less so that six thousand foot and seven hundred horse should have suffered themselves to be all murdered in a place where two hundred men only might have kept off a whole army. The account of this pretended butchery is introduced with all the marks of imposture: “When the earth groaned under the tyranny of Diocletian, heaven was peopled with martyrs.” Now, this event, such as it is related, is supposed to have happened in 286, the very time in which Diocletian most favored the Christians, and that the Roman Empire was in a state of the greatest tranquillity. But to cut short this matter at once, no such legion as the Theban ever existed; the Romans were too haughty and too wise to form a corps of those Egyptians, who served only as slaves in Rome, *Vernæ Canopi*; we may as well suppose them to have had a Jewish legion. We have the names of two and thirty legions that formed the principal military force of the Roman Empire, and it is very certain the Theban legion is not to be found among them. In a word, we may rank this story with the acrostic verses of the Sibyls, which are said to have foretold the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, and with many other like spurious productions, which false zeal has trumped up to impose upon credulity.

CHAPTER 10. THE DANGER OF FALSE LEGENDS AND PERSECUTION

Mankind has been too long imposed upon by falsehood; it is therefore time that we should come to the knowledge of the few truths that can be distinguished from amidst the clouds of fiction which cover Roman history from the times of Tacitus and Suetonius, and with which the annals of the other nations of antiquity have almost always been obscured.

Can any one, for example, believe that the Romans, a grave and modest people, could have condemned Christian virgins, the children of persons of the first quality, to common prostitution? This is assuredly very inconsistent with the noble austerity of that nation from whom we received our laws, and who punished so rigorously the least transgression of chastity in their vestals. These shameful stories may indeed be found in the *Actes Sincères* of Ruinart. But should we believe those acts before the "Acts of the Apostles"? The *Actes Sincères* tell us from Bollandus that there were in the city of Ancira seven Christian virgins, each of them upwards of seventy, whom the governor, Theodectes, ordered to be deflowered by the young men of the place; but these poor maidens having escaped this disaster—as indeed there was great reason they should—he compelled them to assist stark naked at the mysteries of Diana, at which, by the way, no one ever assisted but in a veil. St. Theodotus, who, though indeed nothing more than an innkeeper, was not the less pious for that, besought God devoutly that he would be pleased to take away the lives of these holy maidens lest they should yield to temptation. God heard his prayer. The governor ordered them all to be thrown into a lake with stones about their necks; immediately after which they appeared to Theodotus, and begged of him, "that he would not suffer their bodies to be devoured by the fishes." These, it seems, were their own words.

Hereupon the innkeeper saint and some of his companions went in the night-time to the side of the lake, which was guarded by a party of soldiers, a heavenly torch going all the way before, to light them. When they came to the place where the guards were posted, they saw a heavenly horseman armed cap-a-pie, with a lance in his hand, who fell upon the soldiers and dispersed them, while St. Theodotus drew the dead bodies of the virgins out of the water. He was afterwards carried before the governor, who ordered his head to be struck off, without the heavenly horseman interfering to prevent it. However disposed we may be to pay all due reverence to the true martyrs of our holy religion, we must confess it is very hard to believe the story of Bollandus and Ruinart.

Need I add to this the legend of young St. Romanus? Eusebius tells us, that having been condemned to be burnt, he was accordingly thrown into the fire, when some Jews, who were present, made a mock of Jesus Christ, who suffered his followers to

be burnt when God had delivered Shadrac, Meshach, and Abednego out of the fiery furnace. No sooner had the Jews uttered this blasphemy than they beheld St. Romanus walking triumphant and unhurt forth from the flaming pile; this being reported to the emperor, he gave orders for his being pardoned, telling the judge that he would not have an affair upon his hands with God—a strange expression for Diocletian! The judge, however, notwithstanding the emperor's clemency, ordered St. Romanus to have his tongue cut out; and, though he had executioners at hand, commanded the operation to be performed by a surgeon. Young Romanus, who had from his birth labored under an impediment of speech, no sooner lost his tongue than he spoke distinctly, and with great volubility. Upon this, the surgeon received a severe reprimand; when, in order to show that he had performed his operation, *secundum artem*, he laid hold of a man who was going by, from whom he cut just the same portion of tongue as he had done from St. Romanus, on which the patient instantly died, for, adds our author very learnedly, "Anatomy teaches us that a man cannot live without his tongue." If Eusebius did really write such stuff, and it has not been added by some other hand, what degree of credit can we give to his history?

We have the relation of the martyrdom of St. Felicitas and her seven children, who are said to have been condemned to death by the wise and pious Antoninus, but without giving us the author's name, who, most probably, possessed of more zeal than veracity, had a mind to imitate the history of the Maccabees. He begins his relation in the following manner: "St. Felicitas was by birth a Roman, and lived in the reign of Antoninus." It is clear by these words that the author did not live at the same time with St. Felicitas. He says that they were judged before the prætor in the Campus Martius, whereas the Roman prefect's tribunal was not in the Campus Martius, but in the Capitol, for, although the Comitia had been held there formerly, yet at this time it was used only as a place for reviewing the soldiers, for chariot races, and for military games. This alone is sufficient to detect the fiction.

The author adds furthermore, that after sentence was passed, the emperor committed the care of seeing it executed to different judges, a circumstance which is entirely repugnant to the usual forms in those times, and in every other.

We also read of St. Hippolytus, who is said to have been drawn in pieces by horses, as was Hippolytus, the son of Theseus. But a punishment of this kind was not known among the ancient Romans; and this fabulous story took its rise wholly from the similitude of names.

And here we may make one observation, that in the multitude of martyrologies, composed wholly by the Christians themselves, we almost always read of a great number of them coming of their own accord into the prison of their condemned brother, following him to execution, saving the blood as it flows from him, burying his dead body and performing miracles with his relics. Now, if the persecution was levelled only at the religion, would not the authors of it have destroyed those who

thus openly declared themselves Christians, administered comfort and assistance to their brethren under sentence, and were moreover, charged with working enchantments with their inanimate remains? Would they not have treated them as we have treated several different sects of Protestants, whom we have butchered and burnt by hundreds, without distinction of age or sex? Is there amongst all the authenticated accounts of the ancient persecutions a single instance like that of St. Bartholomew, and the massacre in Ireland? Is there one that comes near to the annual festival, which is still celebrated at Toulouse, and which for its cruelty deserves to be forever abolished, where the inhabitants of a whole city go in procession to return thanks to God, and felicitate one another, for having, two hundred years ago, massacred upwards of four thousand of their fellow subjects?

With horror I say it, but it is an undoubted truth, that we, who call ourselves Christians, have been persecutors, executioners, and assassins! And of whom? Of our own brethren. It is we who have razed a hundred towns to their foundations with the crucifix or Bible in our hands, and who have continually persevered in shedding torrents of blood, and lighting the fires of persecution, from the reign of Constantine to the time of the religious horrors of the cannibals who inhabited the Cévennes; horrors which, praised be God, no longer exist.

Indeed, we still see at times some miserable wretches of the more distant provinces sent to the gallows on account of religion. Since the year 1745 eight persons have been hanged of those called predicants or ministers of the gospel, whose only crime was that of having prayed to God for their king in bad French, and giving a drop of wine, and a morsel of leavened bread, to a few ignorant peasants. Nothing of all this is known in Paris, where pleasure engrosses the whole attention, and where they are ignorant of everything that passes, not only in foreign kingdoms, but even in the more distant parts of their own. The trials in these cases frequently take up less time than is used to condemn a deserter. The king wants only to be informed of this, and he would certainly extend his mercy on such occasions.

We do not find that the Roman Catholic priests are treated in this manner in any Protestant country: there are above a hundred of them,[28] both in England and Ireland, publicly known to be such, and who have yet been suffered to live peaceably and unmolested, even during the last war.

Shall we then always be the last to adopt the wholesome sentiments of other nations? They have corrected their errors, when shall we correct ours? It has required sixty years to make us receive the demonstrations of the great Newton: we have but just begun to dare to save the lives of our children by inoculation, and it is but of very late date that we have put in practice the true principles of agriculture; when shall we begin to put in practice the true principles of humanity, or with what

[28] The Catholic priests are now numbered by thousands in Great Britain and Ireland.

face can we reproach the heathens with having made so many martyrs, when we ourselves are guilty of the same cruelties in the like circumstances?

Let it be allowed that the Romans put to death a number of Christians on account of their religion only: if so, the Romans were highly blamable; but shall we commit the same injustice, and while we reproach them for their persecutions, be persecutors ourselves?

If there should be any one so destitute of honesty, or so blinded with enthusiasm, as to ask me here, why I thus undertake to lay open our errors and faults, and to destroy the credit of all our false miracles and fictitious legends, which serve to keep alive the zeal and piety of many persons; and should such a person tell me that some errors are absolutely necessary; that, like ulcers, they give a vent to the humors of the body, and by being taken away would compass its destruction, thus would I answer him:

“All those false miracles by which you shake the credit due to real ones, the numberless absurd legends with which you clog the truths of the Gospel, serve only to extinguish the pure flame of religion in our hearts.” There are too many persons, who, desirous of being instructed, but not having the time for acquiring instruction, say: “The teachers of my religion have deceived me, therefore there is no religion: it is better to throw myself into the arms of Nature than those of Error; and I had rather place my dependence on her law than in the inventions of men.” Others again unhappily go still greater lengths; they perceive that imposture has put a bridle in their mouths, and therefore will not submit even to the necessary curb of truth; they incline towards atheism, and run into depravity because others have been impostors and persecutors.

Such are undeniably the consequences of pious frauds and superstitious fopperies. Mankind in general reason but by halves: it is certainly a very vicious way of arguing to say, that because the golden legend of Voraginus, and the “Flower of Saints” of the Jesuit Ribadeneira, abound in nothing but absurdities, therefore there is no God: that the Catholics have massacred a great number of Huguenots, and the Huguenots in their turn have murdered a great number of Catholics, therefore there is no God: that certain bad men have made use of confession, the holy communion, and all the other sacraments, as a means for perpetrating the most atrocious crimes, and therefore there is no God. For my part, I, on the contrary, should conclude from thence that there is a God, who after this transitory life, in which we have wandered so far from the true knowledge of Him, and have seen so many crimes committed under the sanction of His holy name, will at length deign to comfort us for the many dreadful calamities we have suffered in this life; for if we consider the many religious wars, and the forty papal schisms, which have almost all of them been bloody; if we reflect upon the multitude of impostures, which have almost all proved fatal; the irreconcilable animosities excited by differences in opinions, and the numberless

evils occasioned by false zeal, I cannot but believe that men have for a long time had their hell in this world.

CHAPTER 11. ILL CONSEQUENCES OF NON-TOLERATION

What! it may then be demanded, shall every one be allowed to believe only his own reason, and to think that his reason, whether true or false, should be the guide of his actions? Yes, certainly, provided he does not disturb the peace of the community; for man has it not in his power to believe or disbelieve;[29] but he has it in his power to pay a proper respect to the established customs of his country; and if we say that it is a crime not to believe in the established religion, we ourselves condemn the primitive Christians, our forefathers, and justify those whom we accuse of having put them to death.

It may be replied, that the difference here is very great, because all other religions are of men, whereas the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church is of God alone. But let me seriously ask, whether the divine origin of our religion is a reason for establishing it by hatred, rage, banishment, confiscation of goods, imprisonment, tortures, and murder, and by solemn acts of thanksgiving to the Deity for such outrages? The more assured we are of the divine authority of the Christian religion, the less does it become weak man to enforce the observance of it: if it is truly of God, God will support it without man's assistance. Persecution never makes any but hypocrites or rebels; a shocking alternative! Besides, ought we to endeavor to establish, by the bloody hand of the executioner, the religion of that God who fell by such hands, and who, while on earth, taught only mercy and forbearance?

And here let us consider a while, the dreadful consequences of the right of non-toleration; if it were permitted us to strip of his possessions, to throw into prison, or to take away the life of a fellow-creature, who, born under a certain degree of latitude, did not profess the generally received religion of that latitude, what is there which would exempt the principal persons of the state from falling under the like punishments? Religion equally binds the monarch and the beggar. Accordingly, we know that upwards of fifty doctors or monks have maintained this execrable doctrine: that it was lawful to depose, or even to kill, such princes as did not agree with the established church; and we also know, that the several parliaments of the kingdom have on every occasion condemned these abominable decisions of still more abominable divines.[30]

[29] See Mr. Locke's excellent letter upon toleration.

[30] The Jesuit Busembaum, and his commentator, the Jesuit La Croix, tell us, that it "is lawful to kill any prince excommunicated by the Pope, of whatsoever country, because the whole world belongs to the Pope; and that whoever accepts of or executes such commission does a meritorious and charitable act." It is this maxim which seems to have been invented in the madhouses of hell, that has almost stirred up all France against the Jesuits, who are now more than ever reproached for this doctrine, which they have so often preached, and as often disavowed. They have endeavored to justify themselves by producing nearly the same maxims in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and several Dominicans.(Peruse, if you can get it, the letter of a layman to a divine on the subject of St. Thomas, a Jesuitical pamphlet published in 1762.) It is true, indeed, that this St. Thomas, the angelic Doctor and Interpreter of the Divine Will, advances that an apostate prince loses his right to the

The blood of Henry the Great was still reeking on the sword of his murderer, when the Parliament of Paris issued an arret to establish the independence of the crown as a fundamental law; whilst Cardinal Duperron, who owed his elevation to that prince, opposed this decree in an assembly of the states, and got it suppressed. The following expression, made use of on this occasion by Duperron, is to be found in all the historical tracts of these times: “Should a prince,” says he, “turn Arian, it would be necessary to depose him.”

But here I must beg the cardinal’s pardon; for let us for a while adopt his chimerical supposition, and say, that one of our kings having read the “History of the Councils and of the Fathers,” and being struck with these words, “My Father is greater than I,” and taking them in too literal a sense, should be divided between the Council of Nice and that of Constantinople, and adopt the opinion of Eusebius of Nicomedia: yet I should not be the less obliged to obey my king, nor think the oath of allegiance I had taken to him less binding; and if you, Mr. Cardinal, should dare to oppose him, and I were one of your judges, I should, without scruple, declare you guilty of high treason.

Duperron carried this dispute much further; but I shall cut it very short, by saying with every good citizen, that I should not look upon myself as bound to obey Henry IV. because he was king; but because he held the crown by the incontestable right of birth, and as the just reward of his virtue and magnanimity.

Permit me then to say, that every individual is entitled by the same right to enjoy the inheritance of his father, and that he in no wise deserves to be deprived of it, or to be sent to the gallows, because he may perhaps be of the opinion of Ratram against Paschasius Ratberg, or of Berengarius against Scotus.

We are very sensible that there are many of our tenets which have not been always clearly explained: Jesus Christ not having expressly told us in what manner the Holy Ghost really proceeds, both the Latin church and the Greek believed that it proceeded only from the Father; but afterwards an article was added to the Creed in

crown, and forfeits the obedience due to him from his subjects;(Lib. ii. part ii. question 12.) that the Church may condemn him to death; that the Emperor Julian was permitted to reign only because he was too powerful to be resisted: that we ought to kill every heretic(Ibid. Questions 11 and 12.) that those who deliver a people from the government of a tyrannical prince, etc., etc. We have, doubtless, a great respect for the angel of the schools; but if he had preached up such maxims in France at the time of his brother James Clement, and the mendicant Ravaillac, his angelical doctorship would have met with but a scurvy reception.

It must be confessed that John Gerson, chancellor of the University, carried the matter yet further than St. Thomas; and John Petit, the Franciscan, still further than Gerson. Several of the order openly maintained the detestable maxims of their brother Petit. It must be acknowledged that this hellish doctrine of king-killing proceeds wholly from the ridiculous notion which has so long prevailed amongst all orders of monks, that the Pope is a God upon earth, and can dispose of the crowns and lives of sovereigns at his pleasure. In this respect, we are inferior even to those Tartarian idolaters who held the Grand Lama to be immortal; greedily gather the contents of his close-stool, dry these precious relics with great care, enclose them in rich cases, and kiss them with the warmest devotion. For my part, I confess that I had rather, for the good of my country, and the sake of public tranquillity, carry those relics constantly about my neck, than to give my assent to the Pope’s having in any case whatsoever an authority over the temporals of kings, or even those of a private person.

which it is said to proceed from the Son also. Now, I desire to know whether the day after this new article was added a person who might abide by the old Creed would have been deserving of death? And is there less cruelty or injustice in punishing at this day a person who may possibly think as they did two or three centuries ago? Or was there any crime in believing in the time of Honorius I. that Christ had not two wills?

It is but very lately that the belief of the immaculate conception has been established: the Dominicans have not received it as yet. Now will any one tell me the precise point of time when the Dominicans will begin to deserve punishment in this world, and in that which is to come?

If any one can set us an example for our conduct, it is certainly the Apostles and the Evangelists. There was sufficient matter to excite a violent schism between St. Peter and St. Paul. The latter, in his Epistle to the Galatians,[31] says: “That he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed; for before that certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with his dissimulation.” “But,” adds he, “when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”

Here now was a subject for a violent dispute. The question was, whether the new Christians followed the manners of the Jews or not. St. Paul at that very time sacrificed in the Temple of Jerusalem; and we know that the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were circumcised Jews; and that they observed the Sabbath, and abstained from the meats forbidden by the Jewish law. Should a bishop of Spain or Portugal at this time be circumcised, or observe the Sabbath, he would assuredly burn at an *auto da fé*: and yet this fundamental point did not occasion the least animosity between the Apostles, or between the primitive Christians.

If the Evangelists had resembled our modern writers, what an immense field was there for disputation between them. St. Matthew reckons only eight and twenty generations from David to Jesus. St. Luke reckons forty-one; and these generations are absolutely different. Yet no dissension appears to have arisen between the disciples on account of these apparent contradictions, which have been so admirably well reconciled by the Fathers of the Church; but they still continued in brotherly love, peace, and charity with one another. What more noble lesson can we have of indulgence in our disputes, and of humility in regard to those things which we do not understand?

St. Paul, in his Epistle to certain Jews of Rome who had been converted to Christianity, employs all the latter part of his third chapter in telling them that by faith

[31] Chap. ii. 11–14.

alone they will be glorified, and that no man is justified by good works only. St. James, on the contrary, in the second chapter of his Epistle to the twelve tribes dispersed over the earth, is continually preaching up to them, that without good works no man can be saved. This has occasioned the separation of two great communions amongst us; but it caused no division among the Apostles.

If the persecuting of those who differ from us in opinion is a holy action, it must be confessed that he who had murdered the greatest number of heretics would be the most glorious saint in heaven. If so, what a pitiful figure would a man who had only stripped his brethren of all they had, and thrown them to rot in a dungeon, make, in comparison with the zealot who had butchered his hundreds on the famous day of St. Bartholomew? This may be proved as follows:

The successor of St. Peter and his consistory cannot err; they approved, they celebrated, they consecrated the action of St. Bartholomew; consequently that action was holy and meritorious; and, by a like deduction, he who of two murderers, equal in piety, had ripped up the bellies of eighty Huguenot women big with child would be entitled to double the portion of glory of another who had butchered but twelve; in this manner, by the same argument also, the enthusiasts of the Cévennes have reason to believe that they will be exalted in glory in proportion to the number of Catholic women, priests and monks whom they may have knocked on the head: but surely these are strange claims to eternal happiness.

CHAPTER 12. IF NON-TOLERATION WAS PART OF THE DIVINE LAW AMONG THE JEWS, AND WHETHER IT WAS ALWAYS PUT IN PRACTICE

By the divine law, I take to be understood those rules and precepts which have been given to us by God Himself. For example, he ordained that the Jews should eat a lamb dressed with bitter herbs, and standing with a staff in their hand, in remembrance of the Passover; that the consecration of the high-priest should be performed by touching the tip of his right ear, his right hand, and his right foot with blood; that the scapegoat should be charged with the sins of the people: he also forbade the eating of all shellfish, swine, hares, hedgehogs, owls, the heron, and the lapwing.[32]

He also instituted their several feasts and ceremonies; and all those things which appeared arbitrary to other nations, and subjected to positive law and custom, when commanded by God Himself, became a divine law to the Jews, in like manner as whatever Jesus Christ the Son of Mary and the Son of God has commanded us is to us a divine law.

But here let us not presume to inquire wherefore it has pleased God to substitute a new law in the room of that given to Moses, and wherefore He commanded Moses more things than he did the patriarch Abraham, and Abraham more than Noah.[33] In

[32] Deut. xiv.

[33] Agreeable to my intention of making some useful notes upon this treatise, I shall here observe that although God is said to have made a covenant with Noah, and with all the beasts of the field, yet he permits him to eat of every thing that has the breath of life, excepting only the eating of blood, which he positively prohibits; and moreover adds that “the Lord will take vengeance of every beast by whom man’s blood shall be shed.”

From these passages and several others of the like tenor, we may infer, with all the sages of ancient and present times, and with every person of enlightened conceptions, that beasts are endowed with some knowledge. We do not find God making a covenant with trees or with stones that have no sense; but He does with the beasts, whom it has pleased Him to endow with senses, frequently more exquisite than our own, and consequently with those ideas that are necessarily connected with sense. It is for this reason that He prohibits the barbarous custom of feeding upon their blood, the blood being the source of life, and consequently of sense. Take away all the blood from an animal and all his organs will immediately cease from action. It is therefore with the greatest justice that we find it said in so many different parts of the Holy Scripture, that the soul, that is to say, what was called the sensitive soul, is in the blood; an opinion perfectly agreeable to nature, and as such received by all nations.

It is upon this opinion that we found that pity which we ought to show to all animals. It is one of the seven precepts of the Noachides that were adopted by the Jews, that no one shall eat the limb of a living animal. This precept is a proof that mankind had formerly the cruelty to mutilate animals in order to feast upon the limbs so cut off, and to leave the creatures living, in order to feed successively upon the other parts of their bodies; a custom which we find to have actually subsisted among some barbarous nations—witness the sacrifices offered in the island of Chios to *Bacchus Omadios*, or the eater of raw flesh. God, by permitting the flesh of animals to serve us for food, seems to recommend them to our humanity. It must be confessed that there is great cruelty in putting them to torture, and that nothing but custom could have lessened in us the natural abhorrence of slaughtering an animal that we have fed with our own hands. There have in all times been sects who have made a religious

this he seems, with infinite condescension, to have accommodated himself to times and the state of population amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and in this gradation, to have shown his paternal love: but these are depths too profound for our weak faculties to measure; I shall therefore confine myself to my subject, and proceed to examine the state of non-toleration among the Jews.

It is certain, that in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy we find several very rigorous laws and severe punishments in relation to religious worship. Several able commentators have been greatly puzzled to reconcile these books of Moses with several passages in the prophets Jeremiah and Amos, and with the famous discourse of St. Stephen, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. Amos says that the Jews constantly worshipped in the wilderness, Moloch and Chiun, gods whom they had made to themselves.[34] And Jeremiah expressly says, that God commanded not their fathers concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices in the day that he brought them out of the land of Egypt.[35] And St. Stephen, in his discourse to the Jews previously mentioned, says: “They worshipped the host of heaven, and that they neither offered sacrifices nor slew beasts, for the space of forty years in the wilderness, but took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of their god Remphan.”[36]

Other critics again infer from the worship of so many strange gods here mentioned, that the Israelites were indulged with having these gods by Moses; and in support of their opinion they quote the following words in Deuteronomy: “When ye shall enter into the land of Canaan, ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.”[37]

scruple of such practices, as do to this day all the inhabitants of the Peninsula of the Ganges. The whole sect of Pythagoreans, both in Greece and Italy, constantly abstained from the eating of flesh. And Porphyry, in his book upon “Abstinence,” reproaches his disciples with having quitted their sect only for the sake of indulging an inhuman appetite.

It is in my opinion a giving up of the light of reason, to pretend to assert that beasts are no more than mere machines; for is it not a manifest contradiction to acknowledge that God has given them the organs of sense, and then to affirm that they have no sense?

Besides, I think one must never have made any observation upon animals, not to distinguish in them the different cries of want, suffering, joy, fear, love, anger, and indeed all other affections of the mind or body; surely, it would be very strange that they should so well express what they have no sense of! This remark may furnish abundant matter of reflection to inquisitive minds, in relation to the power and goodness of the Creator, who has been pleased to bestow life, sense, ideas, and memory on those beings whose organs he has formed with His own all-powerful hand. As to us, we neither know how these organs are formed, how they are unfolded, in what manner we receive life, nor by what laws sense, ideas, memory, and will are annexed to that life; and yet in this dark and ternal state of ignorance inherent to our natures, we are perpetually disputing with, and persecuting one another, like the bulls of the field, who fight with their horns, without knowing for what use, or in what manner those horns were given them.

[34] Amos v. 26.

[35] Jer. vii. 22.

[36] Acts vii. 42.

[37] Deut. xii. 8. Several writers have too rashly concluded from this passage that the chapter concerning the golden calf—which is no other than the Egyptian god Apis—has, as well as many other chapters, been added to the books of Moses.

Eben-Ezra was the first who undertook to prove that the Pentateuch—or the five books of Moses—was written in the times of the Kings. Wollaston, Collins, Tindal, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and many

others have asserted that in those ages men had no other way of committing their thoughts to writing but by engraving them upon polished stone, brick, lead, or wood; and tell us that in the time of Moses the Chaldæans and Egyptians had no other way of writing, and that then they could engrave but in a very abridged manner, and by hieroglyphics, the substance only of such things as they thought worthy of being transmitted to posterity, and could never form any regular histories; then it was next to an impossibility to engrave books of any considerable bulk in the wilderness, where they were continually changing their habitation; where they had no person to furnish them with clothing, to make that clothing for them, or even to mend their sandals, and where God was obliged to perform a miracle to preserve the garments of His people entire. They say that it is hardly probable that there should have been so many engravers among them, at the time that they were so deficient in the more necessary arts of life, and did not know even how to make bread; and if we answer to this, that the pillars of the tabernacle were of brass, and their chapiters of massy silver they reply, that though the order for this might have been given in the wilderness, it was not executed till after they were settled in perfect tranquillity.

They cannot conceive, they say, how the Israelites, who were a poor and vagabond people, could have asked for a calf of massy gold to be erected for the object of their adoration, at the foot of the very mountain where God was then talking with Moses, and in the very midst of the thunder and lightning, and the sound of the heavenly trumpet, which were heard and seen by all present. They profess their astonishment that it should have been only the day before Moses descended from the mountain, that all the people should have addressed themselves to his brother Aaron to raise this golden calf; or how it was possible for Aaron to have cast such an image in one single day; and still more, how Moses could have reduced it into an impalpable powder. They say that it is impossible for any artist to make a statue of gold in less than three months, and that not all the possible efforts of the chemical art are sufficient to reduce such a mass into a powder that may be swallowed, and consequently, that the prevarication of Aaron and this operation of Moses must have been two miracles.

Deceived by the humanity and goodness of their hearts, they cannot believe that Moses slaughtered three and twenty thousand souls to expiate this crime; nor, that so many men would have tamely suffered themselves to be murdered without a third miracle. Lastly, they think it very extraordinary that Aaron, who was the most guilty of all, should have been rewarded for that very crime for which the rest underwent so dreadful a punishment, by being created high-priest, and go to offer sacrifice at the high altar, while the bodies of three and twenty thousand of his slaughtered brethren lay bleeding round him.

They start the same difficulties concerning the eighty thousand Israelites who were slain by order of Moses, to atone for the crime of a single one of them, for being surprised with a Moabite woman; and seeing that Solomon, and so many other of the Jewish kings did, without being punished for it, take to themselves strange wives, they cannot conceive what great crime there could be in an individual making an alliance with one Moabite woman.

Ruth was a Moabitess, though her family was originally of Bethlehem; the Scripture always distinguishes her by the name of Ruth the Moabitess; and yet she went and laid herself by the side of Boaz, received six measures of barley from him, was afterwards married to him, and was the grandmother of David. Rahab was not only a stranger, but also a common prostitute, or a harlot, as she is called in Scripture; yet she was taken to wife by Solomon, a prince of Judæa; from whom also David was descended. This Rahab is taken to be a type of the Christian church by several of the ancient fathers; and especially by Origen, in his seventh homily on Joshua.

Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, by whom David begat Solomon, was a Hittite. And if we go farther back, we shall find that the patriarch Judah married a Canaanitess; and his sons lay with Thamar, who was of the race of Aaron; and the woman with whom Judah, without knowing it, committed incest, was not of the Israelitish race.

Thus then was our Lord Jesus Christ pleased to take upon him flesh in a family descended from five aliens, to show that all nations should partake of his inheritance. The rabbi Eben-Ezra was, as we have already observed, the first who undertook to prove that the Pentateuch was compiled long after the time of Moses; and for his authority quotes several passages in those books; and amongst others the following: “The Canaanite then dwelt in that land. The mountain of Moriah, called the Mountain of God. The bed of Og, king of Bashan, is still to be seen in Rabah. And the country of Bashan is called the villages of Jaiar unto this day. Never was there a prophet seen in Israel like unto Moses. These are the kings who reigned in Edom, before any king reigned over Israel.” He pretends that these passages, in which mention is made of events that happened long after the time of Moses, could

And as a further proof, they say that there is no mention made of any religious act of the people of Israel while in the wilderness; neither the celebration of the Passover, nor of the Feast of the Tabernacles, nor of any public form of worship being established, nor even the practice of circumcision, the seal of the covenant made by God with Abraham.

They likewise refer to the history of Joshua, where this great conqueror thus addresses the Jews: “If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day

never have been written by Moses himself. To this it is replied, that these passages were added long after by way of notes by the transcribers.

Newton, whose name ought on every other occasion to be mentioned with respect, but who, as a man, may have been liable to error, in the introduction to his commentaries upon Daniel and St. John, ascribes the five books of Moses, Joshua, and Judges to holy writers of much later date; and founds his opinion on the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis, the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twenty-first chapters of Judges, the eighth chapter of Samuel, the second chapter of Chronicles, and the fourth chapter of the book of Ruth; and indeed, considering that in the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis we find mention made of Kings, and that David is spoken of in the books of Judges and that of Ruth, it should seem that those books were compiled in the times of the Kings. This is also the opinion of several divines, at the head of whom is the famous Le Clerc. But there are very few of those who are followers of this opinion, that have had the curiosity to fathom these mysteries; a curiosity which certainly makes no part of the duty of man. For when the learned and the ignorant, the prince and the peasant, shall, after this short life, appear together before the throne of Eternal Majesty, every one of us then will wish to have been just and humane, generous and compassionate; and no one will pride himself in having known exactly the year in which the Pentateuch was written, or in having been able to distinguish the true text from the additional notes in use among the Scribes. God will not ask us whether we were of the opinion of the Masorites against the Talmud, or whether we may not have mistaken a *Caph* for a *Beth*, a *Yod* for a *Vau*, or a *Daleth* for a *Resh*. No, certainly; but he will judge us according to our deeds, and not according to our knowledge of the Hebrew language. Let us therefore abide firmly by the decision of the Church, so far as is agreeable to the reasonable duty of a believer.

We will conclude this note with an important passage from Leviticus, a book composed after the time of the golden calf. The Jews are there commanded no more to offer their sacrifices to goats with whom they have gone a-whoring.(Leviticus vii. and xviii. 22.) We cannot say whether this strange worship came from Egypt, the country of sorcery and superstition; but there is reason to believe, that the custom of our pretended magicians of keeping a Sabbath apart, for adoring a goat, and committing such detestable uncleanliness with it as is shocking to conception, came from the ancient Jews, as it is certain that they first taught a part of Europe the practice of magic. What a detestable people! Surely such infamous and unnatural practices deserve the punishment at least equal to that which befell them for worshipping the golden calf; and yet, we find the lawgiver contents himself with simply prohibiting those practices. We have quoted this subject only to show what the Jewish nation was; the sin of bestiality must certainly have been very common amongst them, since they are the only people we know among whom there was a necessity for any law to prohibit that crime, the commission of which was not even suspected by any other legislators.

There is reason to believe that on account of the fatigues and distresses which the Jews suffered in the deserts of Paran, Horeb, and Kadash-Barnea, the female species, which is always the weakest, might have failed amongst them; and it is certain that the Jews were greatly in want of women, since we find them almost always commanded, when they conquered any town or village, to the right or left of the lake Asphaltes, to put all the inhabitants to the sword, excepting only the young women who were of an age to know man.

The Arabs, who still inhabit a part of these deserts, stipulate to this day in the treaties which they make with the caravans, that they shall furnish them with marriageable women; so that it is not improbable but that the young men of those barren countries might have carried the depravation of human nature so far as to have had carnal commerce with goats, as is related of the shepherds of Calabria.

It is still, however, uncertain whether any monsters were produced by this unnatural copulation, and whether there is any foundation for the ancient stories of satyrs, fauns, centaurs, and minotaurs; history says there is; but natural philosophy has not yet cleared up to us this monstrous circumstance.

whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell:" and the people said, "Nay, but we will serve the Lord our God (Adonai)." And Joshua said unto the people, "Ye have chosen, now therefore put away the strange gods which are among you." Hence, say they, it is evident that the Israelites had other gods besides the Lord (Adonai) under Moses.

It is altogether needless to take up the reader's time with an attempt to refute the opinions of those critics who think that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses. This subject has been sufficiently discussed long ago; and, even admitting that some few parts of it were written in the times of the Judges, the Kings, or the Prophets, it would not make the whole less inspired or divine. It is sufficient, in my opinion, if the Holy Scripture proves to us, that, notwithstanding the extraordinary punishments which the Jews called down upon themselves by their idolatrous worship of the golden calf, they continued for a long time to enjoy perfect liberty of conscience; and it is even probable, that Moses, after having massacred the twenty-three thousand, in the first transports of his rage against his brother and them for having erected this idol, finding that nothing was to be gained by such severity in matters of religion, was glad to wink at the fondness the people expressed for strange gods.

And indeed he himself appears soon after to have transgressed the very law which he had given:[38] for, notwithstanding his having forbidden all molten or graven images, we find him erecting the brazen serpent. And this law was again dispensed with by Solomon in the building of his temple; where that prince caused twelve brazen bulls to be placed as supporters to the great Laver; as also cherubim in the ark, which had two heads, one of an eagle and the other of a calf; and it was probable from this latter head, badly made, and found in the temple by the Roman soldiers at the time of their plundering of it, that the Jews were so long reported to have worshipped an ass. Moreover, notwithstanding the repeated prohibitions against the worship of false gods, Solomon, though giving way to the grossest idolatry, lived and died in peace. Jeroboam, to whom God himself gave ten parts out of twelve of the kingdom, set up two golden calves, and yet reigned two and twenty years, having united in his person the twofold dignity of monarch and of high-priest. The petty people of Judæa erected altars and images to strange gods under Rehoboam. Pious King Aza suffered the high places to remain undemolished. And lastly, Uriah, the high-priest, erected a brazen altar, which had been sent to him by the king of Syria, in the temple, in the place of the altar of burnt-offerings. In a word, we do not anywhere find the least constraint in point of religion among the Jews; it is true, indeed, that they frequently destroyed and murdered one another; but that was from motives of political concern, and not about the modes of belief. It is true, that among the prophets we find some making heaven a party in their vengeance. Elias, for instance, calls down fire from heaven to consume the priests of Baal. And Elisha sent bears to devour two and forty little children for calling him baldhead. But these

[38] Num. xxi 9.

miracles are very rare in their kind, and it would moreover be somewhat inhuman to desire to imitate them. We are also told that the Jews were a most ignorant and cruel people; and that in their war with the Midianites[39] they were commanded by Moses to kill all the male children and all the child-bearing women, and to divide the spoil.[40] They found in the enemy's camp 675,000 sheep, 72,000 oxen, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 young maidens, and they took all the spoil and slew the captives. Several commentators will have it, that thirty-two of the young women were sacrificed to the Lord. "The Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons."[41]

It is evident that the Jews offered human sacrifices to God; witness that of Jephthah's daughter,[42] and of King Agag hewed in pieces by the prophet Samuel.[43] And we find the prophet Ezekiel promising them, by way of

[39] Midian was not included in the Land of Promise; it is a little canton of Idumæa, in Arabia Petræa, beginning to the northward of the torrent of Arron, and ending at the torrent of Zared, in the midst of rocks on the eastern border of the lake Asphaltes. This country is inhabited by a small Arabian horde or tribe, and may be about eight leagues long and about seven in breadth.

[40] Num. xxxi.

[41] Num. xxxi. 40.

[42] It is plain by the text that Jephthah did actually sacrifice his daughter. Doctor Calmet; in his dissertation upon Jephthah's vow, says, that "God did not approve these vows; but when once any one had made them, he insisted upon their being fulfilled, was it only to punish those who made them, and to put a check upon them in the doing it by fear of being obliged to perform them." This action of Jephthah is condemned by St. Augustine and almost all the fathers, although the Scripture says that he was filled with the spirit of God; and St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, greatly praises Jephthah, exalting him even above Samuel and David.

St. Jerome, in his Epistle to Julian, expresses himself thus; "Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to the Lord, and therefore the Apostle has placed him among the saints." Here now is a diversity in opinions, concerning which it is not permitted us to pronounce a decision; nay, it is even dangerous to have any opinion of our own.

[43] The death of Agag, king of the Amalekites, may be looked upon as a real sacrifice. Saul had made this prince a prisoner of war, and had admitted him to a capitulation notwithstanding that the priest and the prophet Samuel had charged him to spare no one; saying to him expressly: "Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."—"And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord at Gilgal."

"The zeal with which this prophet was animated," says Calmet, "put a sword into his hand on this occasion, to revenge the honor of God, and to confound Saul."

In this melancholy adventure, we have a vow, a priest, and a victim; consequently, it is a real sacrifice. We find from history that most nations, the Chinese excepted, were wont to sacrifice human victims to the Deity; Plutarch says, that this custom prevailed even among the Romans at some certain times. Cæsar in his "Commentaries" tells us that the Germans were going to sacrifice two of his officers, whom he had sent to confer with their king, Ariovistus, had not Cæsar delivered them by beating the German army. I have in another place observed, that this violation of the laws of nations, and the offering of human victims, which was rendered more horrible by its being done by the hands of their women, seems a little to contradict Tacitus's panegyric on them in his treatise "*De Moribus Germanorum*," which seems rather to have been designed as a satire upon the Roman people, than to praise the Germans, to whom he was an utter stranger. And here we may observe by the way, that Tacitus was fonder of satire than of truth; he labors to throw everything, even the most indifferent actions, into an odious point of light; and his malice pleases us as much as his style, because we are naturally fond of wit and slander.

But to return to the subject of human sacrifices. This custom prevailed as much among our forefathers as with the Germans; it is the lowest degree of debasement to which human nature can fall when left to herself, and is one of the effects of the weakness of mortal understanding, which reasons thus: We ought to offer to God whatever we have of most pleasing or valuable; there is nothing more valuable

encouragement, that they should feast upon human flesh: “Ye shall eat of the flesh of the horse, and of his rider, and ye shall drink the blood of the princes of the earth.”[44] But although the history of this people does not furnish us with one single act of generosity, magnanimity, or humanity, yet amidst so long and dismal a night of barbarism, there is continually breaking forth a cheering ray of universal toleration.

Jephthah, who was inspired of God, and who sacrificed to him his daughter, says to the chief of the Amorites, “Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? so whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive from before us, them will we possess.”[45] This declaration is express, and might be carried to a great length; however, it is at least an evident proof that God permitted the worship of Chemosh. For the words of the Holy Scripture are not “*Thou thinkest* thou hast a right to possess that which thy god Chemosh giveth thee to possess,” but expressly, “*Thou hast* a right to possess,” etc., for that is the true interpretation of the Hebrew words *Otho thirasch*.

The story of Micah and the Levite, related in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Book of Judges, is a still more incontestable proof of this extensive toleration and liberty of conscience allowed among the Jews. The mother of Micah having lost eleven hundred shekels of silver, and her son having restored them to her, she dedicated or vowed them unto the Lord, and made images with them, and she built a small chapel and hired a Levite to officiate therein for ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel and his victuals. Then said Micah: “Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing that I have a Levite to be my priest.”[46]

In a short time after, six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, who were in search of some town which they might seize upon as an inheritance to dwell in, came to the house of Micah, where they found the Levite officiating; and having no priest of their own with them, and thinking that on that account God would not prosper their undertaking, they seized upon the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim belonging to Micah, and also the Levite, whom they took with them in spite of all the remonstrances of the latter, and the outcries of Micah and his mother. After this, full of assurance of success, they went and fell upon the city of Laish, and smote all the inhabitants with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city to the ground, as was their

than our children; therefore we ought to select the youngest and most beautiful to sacrifice them to the Deity.
Philo says that the Canaanites used to offer their children in sacrifice, before God had commanded Abraham, as a trial of his faith, to offer up his only son, Isaac.
Sanchoniathon, as quoted by Eusebius, says that the Phœnicians, when threatened with any great danger or distress, offered up the most favorite of their children, and that Ilus sacrificed his son, Jehud, much about the same time that God made the trial of Abraham’s faith. It is very difficult to penetrate into the dark recesses of early antiquity; but it is too melancholy a truth that these horrible sacrifices were almost everywhere in use; and men have laid them aside, only in proportion as they have become civilized. So true is it that civilization is the nurse of humanity.

[44] Ezek. xxxix. 49.
[45] Judges ix. 24.
[46] Judges xvii. last verse.

usual custom; they then built them another city, and called its name Dan,[47] in remembrance of their victory; and they set up Micah's graven image; and what is more remarkable, Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, was a priest of the temple, wherein the God of Israel and the idol of Micah were both worshipped at the same time.[48]

After the death of Gideon, the Israelites worshipped Baal-Perith for upwards of twenty years, and abandoned the worship of the true God, without any punishment being inflicted upon them for it, either by their chiefs, their judges, or their priests. This, I must confess, was a very heinous crime; but then, if even this idolatry was tolerated, how great must have been the differences of the true worship?

There are some persons, who, in support of non-toleration, bring us the authority of God Himself; who, having suffered His ark to fall into the hands of the Philistines in the day of battle, punished them only by afflicting them with an inward distemper, resembling the hæmorrhoids or piles, by breaking in pieces the statue of their god Dagon, and by sending a number of rats to devour the fruits of their lands. But when the Philistines, in order to appease his wrath, sent back the ark drawn by two cows that gave milk to their calves, and made an offering to the Lord of five golden rats, and the like number of golden hæmorrhoids, the Lord smote seventy of the Elders of Israel, and fifty thousand of the people, for having looked upon the ark. To this it may be answered, that the judgment of God was not, on this occasion, directed against any particular belief, any difference in worship, or idolatry.

If God had meant to punish idolatry, He would have destroyed all the Philistines who had attempted to seize upon His ark, and who were worshippers of the idol Dagon; whereas, we find Him smiting with death fifty thousand and seventy of His own people, for having looked upon His ark, which they ought not to have looked upon. So much did the laws and manners of those times and the Jewish dispensation differ from everything that we know, and so inscrutable are the ways of God to us! "The rigorous punishment," says the learned Doctor Calmet, "inflicted on such a multitude of persons on this occasion, will appear excessive only to those who do not comprehend how greatly God would have Himself feared and respected among His chosen people, and who judge of the ways and designs of Providence only by the weak lights of their own reason."

Here then God punished the Israelites, not for any strange worship, but for a profanation of His own; an indiscreet curiosity, a disobedience of His precepts, and perhaps an inward rebellious spirit. It is true, that such punishments appertain alone to the God of the Hebrews, and we cannot too often repeat, that those times and manners were altogether different from ours.

[47] Judges xviii. 11–29.
[48] Judges xviii. 11–39.

Again, we find, some ages after, when the idolatrous Naaman asked of Elijah if he might be allowed to follow his king up to the temple of Rimmon, and bow down himself there with him; this very Elijah,[49] who had before caused the little children to be devoured by bears only for mocking him, answered this idolater, “Go in peace.”

But this is not all; we find the Lord commanding Jeremiah to make him bonds and yokes, saying: “Put them upon thy neck,[50] and send them to the king of Edom, and

[49] The author evidently confounds Elisha and Elijah.

[50] Those who are unacquainted with the customs of antiquity, and who judge only from what they see about them, may possibly be astonished at this odd command; but they should reflect, that at those times it was the custom in Egypt, and most part of Assyria, to express things by hieroglyphical figures, signs, and types.

The prophets, who were called seers by the Egyptians and Jews, not only expressed themselves in allegories, but also represented by signs those events which they foretold. Thus we find Isaiah, the chief of the four greater prophets, taking a roll and writing therein, “Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz,” that is, “Make haste to the spoil”; and going in unto the prophetess, she conceived and bare a son, whom the Lord called Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz. This is a type of the evils which were to be brought upon the Jews by the people of Egypt and Assyria.

The prophet also says: “Before that the child shall be of an age to eat butter and honey, to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that they abhorred shall be delivered of both her kings; and the Lord will hiss to the flies of Egypt, and for the bees of Assyr, and the Lord will shave with a razor that is hired, the beard and the hair of the feet of the king of Assyria.”

This prophecy of the bees, and of the shaving of the beard, and of the hair of the feet, can be understood only by those who know that it was a custom to call the swarms of bees together by the sound of a flageolet or pipe, or some other rustic instrument; that the greatest affront that could be done to any man was to cut off his beard; and that the hair on the private parts was called the hair of the feet, which was never shaven but in cases of leprosy, or other unclean disorders. All these figures, which would appear so strange in our style, signify nothing more than that the Lord will, in the course of a few years, deliver His people from captivity.

We find the same prophet walking naked and barefoot to show that the king of Assyria shall lead away the Egyptians and Ethiopians captives, without their having wherewithal to cover their nakedness.

The prophet Ezekiel eats the roll of parchment which God had given him; afterwards he eats his bread covered with excrement, and continues to lie on his left side three hundred and ninety days, and forty days on his right side, to show that the Jews should want bread, and as a type of the number of years they were to remain in captivity. He loads himself with chains, as a figure of those that they are to wear; and he cuts off the hair of his head and of his beard, and divides them into three parts; the first of these portions is a type of those who are to perish in the city of Jerusalem; the second, of such as are to be slain without the walls; and the third, of those who are to be carried away to Babylon.

The prophet Hosea takes to himself a woman who is an adulteress, and whom he purchases for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer and a half of barley, and says unto her: “Thou shalt abide for me many days, thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man, for so shall the children of Israel abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim”; in a word, the seers or prophets scarcely ever foretell anything without using a type or sign of the thing foretold.

Jeremiah therefore only conformed to the usual custom when he bound himself with cords, and put bonds and yokes upon his neck, as figures of the approaching slavery of those to whom he sent them, and if we attend properly to these things, we shall find the times here spoken of to be like those of an old world, differing in everything from the new society. The laws, the manner of making war, were all absolutely different; and if we only open Homer and the first book of Herodotus, we need nothing more to convince us that there is not the least resemblance between the people of early antiquity and ourselves; hence we ought to distrust our own judgment, when we attempt to compare their manners with ours. Even nature herself is not now the same she was then; magicians and sorcerers had at that time a power over her which they no longer possess; they enchanted serpents, they raised the dead out of their tombs, etc. God sent dreams, and men interpreted them. The gift of prophecy

to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon," and he did so, bidding the messenger say to them in the name of the Lord: "I have given all your lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant."[51] Here then we have God declaring an idolatrous prince his servant and favorite.

The same prophet having been cast into the dungeon by order of the Jewish king Zedekiah, and afterwards released by him, advises him in the name of God to submit himself to the king of Babylon, saying: "If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, thy soul shall live." God therefore takes part with an idolatrous king, and delivers into his hands His holy ark, the looking upon which only had cost the lives of fifty thousand and seventy Jews; and not only so, but also delivers up to him the Holy of Holies, together with the rest of the temple, the building of which had cost a hundred and eight thousand talents of gold, one million seventeen thousand talents of silver, and ten thousand drachmas of gold, that had been left by David and his great officers for building the house of the Lord; which, exclusive of the sums expended for that purpose by King Solomon, amounts to the sum of nineteen milliards, sixty-two millions, or thereabouts, of the present currency. Never, surely, was idolatry so nobly rewarded. I am sensible that this account is exaggerated, and that it seems to be an error of the copyist. But if we reduce the sum to one half, to a fourth, or even to an eighth part, it will still be amazing. But Herodotus's account of the treasures which he himself saw in the temple of Ephesus is not less surprising. In fine, all the riches of the earth are as nothing in the sight of God; and the title of *my servant*, with which he dignified Nebuchadnezzar, is the true and invaluable treasure.

Nor does God show less favor to Kir, or Koresh whom we call Cyrus, and whom He calls His *Christ*, His *anointed*, though he never was anointed according to the general acceptation of that word, and was moreover a follower of the religion of Zoroaster, and a usurper in the opinion of the rest of mankind; yet him He calls His *shepherd*;[52] and we have not in the whole sacred writings so great an instance of divine predilection.

We are told by the prophet Malachi, that, "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, the name of God shall be great among the Gentiles; and in

was common. And we read of several metamorphoses, such as of Nebuchadnezzar into an ox, of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, and of five whole cities changed in an instant into a burning lake. There were likewise several species of men that no longer exist. The race of giants, Rephaim, Emim, Nephilim, and Enacim, have totally disappeared. St. Augustine, in his fifth book "*De Civitate Dei*," says that he saw a tooth of one of those ancient giants that was at least a hundred times as large as one of our grinders. Ezekiel speaks of pygmies (*Gamadim*), not above a cubit high, who fought at the siege of Tyre; and almost all writers, sacred and profane, have agreed in the truth of these relations. In fine, the ancient world was so different from ours that there is no drawing any rule for our conduct from it; and if in the earliest ages of antiquity we find mankind mutually persecuting and destroying one another on account of their different faiths, far be it from us, who live under the enlightened law of grace, to copy after such originals.

[51] Jer. xxvii. xxviii.

[52] Isaiah xliv. and xlv.

every place a pure offering shall be offered unto his name."[53] God takes as much care of the idolatrous Ninevites as of His chosen Jews. Melchizedek, though no Jew, was the high-priest of the living God. Balaam, though an idolater, was His prophet. The Holy Scripture then teaches us, that God not only tolerated every other religion, but also extended His fatherly care to them all. And shall we, after this, dare to be persecutors?

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[53] Malachi i. 1.

CHAPTER 13. THE GREAT TOLERATION EXERCISED AMONG THE JEWS

Thus, then, under Moses, the Judges, and the Kings, we find numberless instances of toleration. Moreover, we are told by Moses, that “God will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation.” This threat was necessary to a people to whom God had not revealed the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishment of a future state. These truths are not to be found in any part of the decalogue, nor in the Levitic or Deuteronomic law. They were the tenets of the Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Cretans, but made no part of the Jewish religion. Moses does not say, “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest inherit *eternal* life,” but “that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”; that is, in this life; and the punishments with which he threatens them regard only the present mortal state; such as being smitten with the scab and with the itch, with blasting and with mildew; that they shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; that they shall build houses, and others shall dwell therein; that they shall plant vineyards, and shall not gather the grapes thereof; that they shall eat the fruit of their own bodies, the flesh of their sons and of their daughters, and be obliged to bow down before the stranger that is within their gates;[54] but he never tells them that their souls are immortal, and shall taste of felicity or punishment after death. God, who conducted His people Himself, punished or rewarded them immediately according to their good or evil deeds. Everything relating to them was temporal, and this the learned Bishop Warburton brings as a proof of the divine origin of the Jewish law;[55] “inasmuch,” says he, “as God being

[54] Deut. xxviii. 28 and seq.

[55] There is but one passage in the whole Mosaic law from which one might conclude that Moses was acquainted with the reigning opinion among the Egyptians, that the soul did not die with the body. This passage is very particular, and is in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy: “There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits (Python), or a wizard, or a necromancer.” From this passage it appears that by invoking the souls of the dead this pretended necromancy supposed a permanency of the soul. It might also happen that the necromancers of whom Moses speaks, being but ignorant deceivers, might not have a distinct idea of the magic they operated. They made people believe that they forced the dead to speak, and by the power of their art restored the body to the same state as when living; without once examining whether their ridiculous operations might authorize the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The ancient magicians were never philosophers; they were at best but a set of stupid jugglers, who played their tricks before as illiterate spectators.

But what is very strange and worthy of observation is that the word “python” should be found in Deuteronomy so long before that Greek term was known to the Hebrews; and indeed this word is not to be found in the Hebrew, of which we have never had a good translation.

There are many insurmountable difficulties in this language; it is a mixture of Phœnician, Egyptian, Syriac, and Arabic, and has undergone many alterations to the present time. The Hebrew verbs had only two moods, the present and the future; the rest were to be guessed at by the sense. The different vowels were frequently expressed by the same characters, or rather, indeed, they were not expressed at all; and the inventors of points have only increased the difficulties they meant to remove. Every adverb had twenty different significations, and the same word had frequently several contrary senses. Add to this that the language was in itself very dry and barren; for the Jews, not being acquainted with

their King, and exercising justice immediately upon them, according to their transgression or obedience, found it not necessary to reveal to them a doctrine which He reserved for after-times, when He should no longer so directly govern His people." Those who through ignorance pretend that Moses taught the immortality of the soul, deprive the New Testament of one of its principal advantages over the Old. It is certain that the law of Moses taught only temporal punishments, extending to the fourth generation; and yet, notwithstanding the positive declaration of God delivered in this law, Ezekiel preached the very contrary to the Jews, telling them, "The son shall not bear the iniquities of the father;"[56] and in another place he goes so far as to make God say that "He had given them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live."[57]

Notwithstanding these contradictions, the book of Ezekiel was not the less admitted into the number of those inspired writers: It is true, that according to St. Jerome, the synagogue did not permit the reading of it till after thirteen years of age; but that was for fear their youth should make a bad use of the too lively description, in the sixteenth and twenty-third chapters, of the whoredoms of Aholah and Aholibah.

But when the immortality of the soul came to be a received doctrine,[58] which was probably about the beginning of the Babylonish captivity, the sect of Sadducees still

the arts, could not express what they knew nothing of. In a word, the Hebrew is to the Greek what the language of a pedant is to that of an academic.

[56] The opinion of Ezekiel was at length the prevailing one of the synagogue; not but that there were always some Jews who, though they believed in a state of eternal punishment, yet believed at the same time that God punished the sins of the fathers upon the children. At present, indeed, they are punished even beyond the fiftieth generation, and yet are in danger of eternal punishment. It may be asked how the offsprings of those Jews who were not concerned in putting Christ to death can be temporarily punished in the persons of their children, who were as innocent as themselves. This temporal punishment, or rather this manner of living, so different from all other people, and of trading over the whole earth without having any country of their own, cannot be considered as a punishment, compared with what they are to expect hereafter on account of their unbelief, and which they might avoid by a sincere repentance.

[57] Ezek. xx. 25.

[58] Those who have thought to discover the doctrine of hell and heaven, such as it is now believed by us, in the Mosaic books, have been strangely mistaken; their error is owing entirely to an idle dispute about words: the Vulgate having translated the Hebrew word *Sheol*, the pit, by the Latin word *infernum*, and this latter having been rendered in French by *enfer*, hell, they have taken occasion from this equivocal translation to establish a belief that the ancient Hebrews had a notion of the *Hades* and *Tartarus* of the Greeks, known to other nations before them by different appellations. We are told in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers, that the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiron, and they and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, or grave; now certainly there is nothing said in this passage concerning the souls of these three persons, nor yet of the torments of hell, nor of eternal punishments.

It is very extraordinary that the authors of the "*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*" under the word *hell* (*enfer*) should say that the ancient Hebrews believed in its existence. If this be true, there would be an insurmountable contradiction in the Pentateuch; for why should Moses have spoken of the punishment after death in one single passage only, of all his works. On this occasion they quote the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy; but after a mutilated manner. The whole passage is as follows: "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities, and I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell; and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the

mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction; I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust."

But have any or all of these expressions the least relation to the idea of hell-torments? On the contrary, it seems as if these words were purposely inserted to prove that our hell was unknown to the ancient Jews.

The author of this article quotes also the following passage from the twenty-fourth chapter of Job: "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, no eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses which they had marked for themselves in the daytime. They know not the light, for the morning is to them as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. He is swift as the waters, their portion is cursed in the earth, he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. Drought and heat consume the snow-waters, so doth the grave those who have sinned."

I quote these passages entire, otherwise it will be impossible to form a true idea of them. But let me ask if there is the least expression here from which one may conclude that Moses ever taught the Jews the clear and simple doctrine of eternal rewards and punishments?

Not to mention that the Book of Job has nothing to do with the Mosaic law, there is great reason to believe that Job himself was not a Jew; this is the opinion of St. Jerome in his "Hebrew Questions upon Genesis." The word Satan, which occurs in Job, was not known to the Jews, nor is it anywhere to be found in the five books of Moses. This name, as well as those of Gabriel and Raphael, were entirely unknown to the Jews before their captivity in Babylon. It would appear, then, that Job is very improperly quoted in this place.

But the last chapter of Isaiah is likewise brought in, where it is said: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Certainly, the casting out of these bodies to the view of all passengers, even to abhorring, and their being eaten by worms, can never mean that Moses taught the Jews the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; and the words "the fire shall not be quenched" can as little signify that the bodies so exposed to public view were to suffer eternal torments in hell.

How can any one quote a passage in Isaiah to prove that the Jews in the time of Moses had adopted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul? According to the Hebrew computation, Isaiah prophesied about the year of the world 3380. Moses lived about the year 2500; therefore there was a distance of eight centuries between the one and the other. Now it is an insult to common sense, a downright mockery, thus to abuse the licence of quoting, by pretending to prove that a writer was of this or that opinion from a passage in another writer who lived eight hundred years after him, and who has not even made any mention of such opinion. It is beyond contradiction that the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments after death, are clearly and positively expressed and declared in the New Testament, and it is equally certain, that nothing concerning them is to be found in any one part of the five books of Moses.

Notwithstanding that the Jews did afterwards embrace this doctrine, they were far from having a proper idea of the spirituality of the soul; they thought, in common with most other nations, that the soul was an uncompounded aerial light substance that retained the appearance of the body it had formerly animated; and hence came the term apparition, manes of the dead. Several fathers of the Church were of the same opinion. Tertullian, in his twenty-second chapter "*De Anima*," expresses himself thus: "*Definimus animam Dei flatu natam, immortalem, corporalem, effigiatam, substantia simplicem*"; that is, "We define the soul a substance, formed by the breath of God; of an immortal, corporeal, figurative, and simple nature."

St. Irenæus, in the thirty-fourth chapter of his second book, says: "*Incorporales sunt animæ quantum ad comparationem mortalium corporum*." "Souls are incorporeal in comparison of mortal bodies." Adding, "Christ has taught us that the soul retains the image of the body"; "*Caracterem corporum in quo adoptantur*," etc. Christ does not appear ever to have taught such a doctrine, and it is difficult to understand what St. Irenæus means in this passage.

St. Hilarius, in his commentary on St. Matthew, is still more express and positive; he roundly asserts the soul to have a corporeal substance, "*Corpoream naturæ suæ substantiam sortiuntur*."

St. Ambrose on Abraham, book ii. chap. viii., will have it that there is nothing free from matter, unless it be the substance of the Blessed Trinity.

continued to believe that there were no rewards or punishments after death, and that the faculties of the soul perished with us in like manner as those of the body. They also denied the existence of angels. In a word, they differed much more from the other Jews than the Protestants do from the Catholics; nevertheless, they lived in peaceable communion with their brethren; and some of their sect were admitted to the high-priesthood.

The Pharisees held fatality or predestination,[59] and believed in the Metempsychosis;[60] the Essenians thought that the souls of the just went into some

These reverend fathers seem to have been very indifferent philosophers; but there is the greatest reason to believe that their divinity was in the main very sound, inasmuch as, notwithstanding their ignorance of the incomprehensible nature of the soul, they asserted it to be immortal, and endeavored to make it Christian.

We know that the soul is of a spiritual nature, but we do not at all know what spirit is. We are very imperfectly acquainted with matter; nor is it possible for us to have a distinct idea of what is not matter. Hardly capable of understanding what effects our senses have, we cannot of ourselves know anything of what surpasses the bound of those senses. We carry some few words of our common language into the inexplorable depths of metaphysics and divinity, in order to acquire some slight idea of those things, which we could never conceive or express; and we use those words as props to support the steps of our feeble understandings in travelling through those unknown regions.

Thus we make use of the word spirit, which is the same as breath or air, to express something which is not matter; and this word breath, air, spirit, inspiring us insensibly with an idea of an uncompounded and light substance, we still refine upon this as much as possible, in order to obtain a proper conception of pure and simple spirituality; but we shall never be able to obtain a distinct notion of this, we do not even know what we say, when we pronounce the word substance; in its literal signification, it signifies something beneath, and thereby shows us that it is incomprehensible; for what is meant by that which is beneath? The knowledge of the secrets of God is not to be acquired in this life. Plunged as we are in mortal obscurity, we fight against one another, and strike at random in the darkness with which we are surrounded, without precisely knowing for what we are fighting.

If mankind would consider all this with attention, every reasonable person will be ready to conclude that we ought to have the greatest indulgence for the opinions of others, and by our conduct endeavor to merit the same from them.

The above remarks are not at all foreign to the principal point in question, which is to know whether men are bound to tolerate one another; inasmuch as by proving that in all times those of different opinions have been alike mistaken, it appears to have been the duty of all mankind in every age to treat each other with kindness and forbearance.

[59] The doctrine of predestination is of long standing and universal; we find it in Homer. Jupiter was desirous to save the life of his son Sarpedon; but destiny had marked him for death, and Jupiter was obliged to submit. Destiny was, with the philosophers, either the necessary concatenation of causes and effects necessarily produced by nature, or that same concatenation ordained by Providence; the latter of which is most reasonable. We find the whole system of fatality or predestination, comprised in this line of Annæus Seneca: "*Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*." It has always been acknowledged that God governs the universe by eternal, universal and immutable laws; this truth gave rise to the many unintelligible disputes concerning free-will, which had never been defined before the great philosopher Locke arose, who has proved it to be the power of acting. God bestows this power, and man, acting freely according to the eternal decrees of Providence, is one of the wheels of the great machine of the universe. Free-will has been a subject of disputation from all antiquity; but no one until of late times was ever persecuted on this subject. How horrible, how absurd is it to have imprisoned and banished on account of this dispute a Pompone d'Andilly, an Arnauld, a Nicole, a Sacy, and so many others who were the shining lights of France!

[60] The theological romance of the Metempsychosis came from India, a part of the world to which we are indebted for many more fables than is generally believed. We find this doctrine explained by that beautiful poet Ovid, in the twelfth book of his "*Metamorphoses*." It has been received in almost every part of the world, and has everywhere met with its opposers; nevertheless, we do not find that any priest among the ancients ever caused a disciple of Pythagoras to be sent to prison.

happy islands,[61] and those of the wicked into a kind of Tartarus, or hell. They offered no sacrifices, and assembled together in particular synagogues of their own. In a word, if we examine closely into the Jewish economy, we shall be surprised to find the most extensive toleration prevailing amidst the most shocking barbarities. This is indeed a contradiction, but almost all people have been governed by contradictions. Happy are those whose manners are mild, while their laws are bloody!

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[61] Neither the ancient Jews, the Egyptians, nor the Greeks, their contemporaries, believed that the soul of man went to heaven after death. The Jews thought that the sun and moon were placed some leagues above us in the same circle, and that the firmament was a thick and solid vault, that supported the weight of the waters, which, however, sometimes ran out through the crevices in this vault. The ancient Greeks placed the palace of their gods upon Mount Olympus. And the abode of heroes after death was, in Homer's time, thought to be in an island beyond the ocean. This likewise was the opinion of the Essenians.
After Homer, planets were assigned to the gods; but there was no more reason for men to place a god in the moon than for the inhabitants of the moon to place a god in our planet of the earth. Juno and Iris had no other palaces assigned them but the clouds, where there was no place to rest the soles of their feet. Among the Sabæans every deity had its star. But as the stars are little suns, it would be impossible to live there without partaking of the nature of fire. Upon the whole, then, it is needless to inquire what the ancients thought of heaven; since the best answer that can be given is, they thought nothing about it.

CHAPTER 14. IF NON-TOLERATION WAS TAUGHT BY CHRIST

Let us now see whether Christ established sanguinary laws, whether He enjoined non-toleration, instituted the horrors of the inquisition, or the butchery of an *auto da fé*.

There are, unless I am much mistaken, very few passages in the New Testament from which the spirit of persecution can have inferred that tyranny and constraint in religious matters are permitted: one is the parable wherein the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king who made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to invite guests to the wedding, saying, “Tell them which were bidden, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage.”[62] But those who were bidden made light of the invitation, one going to his farm and another to his business, and the rest of them took the king’s servants and slew them. Upon which he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city. After this he sent out into the highways to invite all that could be found to come to the marriage; but one of the guests happening to sit down to table without a wedding garment, the king ordered him to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness.

But it is clear that this allegory relates only to the kingdom of heaven; therefore, assuredly no man can assume a right from thence to fetter or imprison his neighbor who should come to dine with him without being properly dressed; nor do I believe that history furnishes us with any instance of a prince causing one of his courtiers to be hanged upon such an occasion; and there is little reason to apprehend that when the emperor sent his pages to any of the princes of the empire to invite them to an entertainment those princes would fall upon the pages and kill them.

The invitation to the marriage feast is a type of the preaching of the gospel, and the murder of the king’s servants is figurative of the persecution of those who preach wisdom and virtue.

The other parable is that of a private person who made a great supper, to which he invited many of his friends,[63] and when he was ready to sit down to table sent his servants to tell them that all things were ready; but one excused himself by saying that he had bought a piece of ground and must needs go and see it, an excuse which was not admissible, as no one goes to visit their lands in the night-time; another said he had bought five yoke of oxen and was going to prove them; he was as much to blame as the other, since no one would go to prove oxen at supper-time; the third said he had married a wife and could not come; this last was certainly a

[62] Matthew xxii. 1–13.
[63] St. Luke xiv.

very good excuse. The master of the house being very angry at this disappointment, told his servants to go into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, and the maimed, the halt and the blind; this being done, and finding that there was yet room, he said unto his servant, “Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them (that you find) to come in.”

It is true that we are not expressly told that this parable is a type of the kingdom of heaven, and the words “compel them to come in” have been perverted to very bad purposes; but it is very evident that one single servant could not *forcibly* compel every person he met to come and sup with his master; besides, the company of people so compelled would not have made the supper very agreeable. “Compel them to come in,” therefore, means nothing more, according to commentators of the best reputation, than pray, desire, press them to come in; therefore, what connection, for heaven’s sake, can prayers and invitations have with persecution?

But to take things in a literal sense, is it necessary to be maimed, halt, and blind, or to be compelled by force to enter into the bosom of the Church? Christ says in the same parable: “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich kinsmen”; but did any one ever infer from this that we should never dine or sup with our friends or kinsmen if they happen to be worth money?

Our Saviour, after this parable of the feast, says: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, his wife and children, his brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,” etc. But is there any person living so unnatural as to conclude from this that he ought to hate his father and mother and his nearest relations? And is it not evident to one of the meanest capacity that the true interpretation of these words is: hesitate not between me and your dearest affections?

The following passage in the eighth chapter of St. Matthew is also quoted: “Whosoever heareth not the word of God shall be like to an heathen, and like one who sitteth at the receipt of custom”; but certainly this is not saying that we ought to persecute all unbelievers and custom-house officers; they are frequently cursed indeed, but they are not delivered up to the arm of secular power. And so far from depriving the latter of any part of the prerogatives of citizens, they are indulged with the greatest privileges; and though their profession is the only one condemned in Scripture, it is of all others the most protected and favored by every government. Why then should we not show some indulgence to our brethren who are unbelievers, while we load with benefits our brethren the tax-gatherers?

Another passage which has been grossly abused is that in St. Matthew and St. Mark, where we are told that Jesus being hungry in the morning, and coming to a fig tree which had no leaves—for it was not the time of figs—Jesus cursed the tree and it immediately dried up.

This miracle has been explained in several different ways, but not one of them appears to authorize persecution. Though a fig tree could not be expected to bear fruit in the beginning of March, yet we find it blasted; but is that a reason why we should blast our brethren with affliction in all seasons of the year? When we meet with anything in holy writing that may occasion doubts in our vain and inquisitive minds, we should pay it all due reverence, but let us not make use of it to countenance cruelty and persecution.

The spirit of persecution which perverts everything has also strained in its own vindication the story of Christ driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and that of his sending a legion of devils out of the body of the man possessed with an evil spirit into two thousand unclean animals; but cannot any one perceive that these two instances were no other than acts of justice, which God Himself deigned to execute for a contravention of His law? It was a disrespect shown to the house of the Lord to change His dwelling into a market for buyers and sellers. And although the Sanhedrim and its priests might permit this traffic for the greater convenience of their sacrifices, yet the God to whom these sacrifices were offered might, doubtless, though under a human shape, overturn this profane practice. In the same manner might He punish those who brought into the country whole troops of those animals which were prohibited by the law of which He Himself deigned to be an observer. These two examples, then, have not the least connection with persecution for religion’s sake; and the spirit of non-toleration must certainly be founded upon very false principles when it everywhere seeks such idle pretexts.

Christ, in almost every other part of His gospel, both by His words and actions, preaches mildness, forbearance and indulgence. Witness the father who receives his prodigal son, and the workman who comes at the last hour and yet is paid as much as the others; witness the charitable Samaritan, and Christ Himself, who excuses His disciples for not fasting, who pardons the woman who had sinned, and only recommends fidelity for the future to the woman caught in adultery. He even condescends to partake of the innocent mirth of those who have met at the marriage feast in Cana, and who being already warmed with wine and wanting still more, Christ is pleased to perform a miracle in their favor by changing their water into wine. He is not even incensed against Judas, whom He knew to be about to betray Him; He commands Peter never to make use of the sword, and reprimands the sons of Zebedee, who, after the example of Elias, wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume a town in which they had been refused a lodging. In a word, He Himself died a victim to malice and persecution; and, if one might dare to compare God with a mortal and sacred things with profane, His death, humanly speaking, had a great resemblance to that of Socrates. The Greek philosopher suffered for the hatred of the sophists, the priests and the heads of the people; the Christian Law-giver, by that of the Scribes, Pharisees and priests. Socrates might have avoided death, but would not; Christ offered Himself a voluntary sacrifice. The Greek philosopher not only pardoned his false accusers and iniquitous judges, he even desired them to treat his

children as they had done himself, should they, like him, one day be happy enough to deserve their hatred. The Christian Law-giver, infinitely superior to the heathen, besought His Father to forgive His enemies. If Christ seemed to fear death, and if the agonies He was in at its approach drew from Him sweat mixed with blood, which is the most violent and rare of all symptoms, it was because He condescended to submit to every weakness of the human frame, which He had taken upon Him; His body trembled, but His soul was unshaken. By His example we may learn that true fortitude and greatness consist in supporting those evils at which our nature shrinks. It is the height of courage to meet death at the same time that we fear it.

Socrates accused the sophists of ignorance and convicted them of falsehood; Jesus, in His godlike character, accused the Scribes and Pharisees of being hypocrites, blind guides and fools, and a race of vipers and serpents.

Socrates was not accused of attempting to found a new sect, nor was Christ charged with endeavoring to introduce a new one. We are told in St. Matthew that the great men and the priests and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death.

Now, if they were obliged to seek for false witnesses, they could not charge Him with having preached openly against the law; besides, it was evident that He complied in every respect with the Mosaic law from His birth to His death. He was circumcised the eighth day like other Jewish children; He was baptized in Jordan, agreeable to a ceremony held sacred among the Jews and among all the other people of the east. All impurities of the law were cleansed by baptism; it was in this manner their priests were consecrated at the solemn feast of the expiation, every one plunged himself in the water, and all new-made proselytes underwent the same ceremony.

Moreover, Jesus observed all the points of the law; He feasted every Sabbath day, and He abstained from forbidden meats; He kept all the festivals, and even before His death He celebrated that of the Passover; He was not accused of embracing any new opinion, nor of observing any strange rites. Born an Israelite, He always lived as an Israelite.

He was accused, indeed, by two witnesses of having said that He could destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days; a speech altogether unintelligible to the carnal Jews, but which did not amount to an accusation of seeking to found a new sect.

When He was examined before the high priest, this latter said to him: “I command you, in the name of the living God, to tell us if Thou art Christ, the Son of God.” We are not told what the high priest meant by the Son of God. This expression was sometimes made use of to signify a just or upright man,[64] in the same manner as the

[64] It was indeed very difficult, not to say impossible, for the Jews to comprehend, without an immediate revelation, the ineyable mystery of the incarnation of God, the Son of God. In the sixth chapter of Genesis we find the sons of great men called “the sons of God.” In like manner the royal

words son of Belial, to signify a wicked person. The carnal Jews had no idea of the sacred mystery of the Son of God, God Himself coming upon earth.

Jesus answered the high priest, “thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”[65]

This answer was looked upon by the whole assembly as a blasphemy. But the Sanhedrim having no longer the power of life and death, they falsely accused Jesus before the Roman governor of the province of being a disturber of the public peace, and one who, said they, should not pay tribute to Cæsar; and, moreover, called Himself King of the Jews. It is therefore incontestably evident that he was accused of a crime against the state.

Pilate being informed that He was a Galilean, sent Him immediately to Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee. This latter, thinking it impossible that a person of Jesus’ appearance should pretend to be the head of a party, or aspire to royalty, treated Him with great contempt, and sent Him back again to Pilate, who had the infamous weakness to condemn Him to death as the only means to appease the tumult raised against himself; more especially as he had lately experienced the revolt of the Jews, as we are told by Josephus. On this occasion Pilate did not show the same generosity which the governor Festus did afterwards.

I now desire to know whether toleration or non-toleration appears to be of divine prescription? Let those who would resemble Christ be martyrs and not executioners.

Psalmist calls the tall cedars “the cedars of God.” Samuel says, “The fear of God fell upon the people”; that is, a violent fear seized them. A great tempest is called the wind of the Lord, and Saul’s distemper, the melancholy of the Lord. Nevertheless, the Jews seemed to have clearly understood that our Saviour called Himself the Son of God in the proper sense of that word; and if they looked upon this as a blasphemous expression, it is an additional proof of their ignorance of the incarnation, and of God, the Son of God, being sent upon earth for the redemption of mankind.

[65] Matthew xxvi. 61–64.

CHAPTER 15. TESTIMONIES AGAINST PERSECUTION

It is an impious act to deprive men of liberty in matters of religion, or prevent them from making choice of a God. No God nor man would be pleased with a forced service.—*Apologetic*, chap. xxiv.

Were violence to be used in defence of the faith, the bishops would oppose it.—*St. Hilarius*, lib. i.

Religion when forced ceases to be religion; we should persuade and not compel. Religion cannot be commanded.—*Lactantius*, lib. iii.

It is detestable heresy to endeavor to bring over by violence, bodily punishments, or imprisonments, those we cannot convince by reasoning.—*St. Athanasius*, lib. i.

Nothing is more contradictory to true religion than constraint.—*St. Justin, Martyr*, lib. v.

Is it for us to persecute those whom God tolerates? said St. Augustine, before his dispute with the Donatists had soured his disposition.

Let no violence be done to the Jews.—*The 56th Canon of the 4th Council of Toledo.*

Advise but compel not.—*St. Bernard's Letters.*

We do not pretend to overcome error by violence.—*Speech of the Clergy of France to Louis XIV.*

We have always disapproved of rigorous measures.—*Assembly of the Clergy, August 11, 1560.*

We know that faith may yield to persuasion, but it never will be controlled.—*Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes, Letter, 19.*

We ought to abstain even from reproachful speeches.—*Bishop of Belley's Pastoral Letters.*

Remember that the diseases of the soul are not to be cured by restraint and violence.—*Cardinal Camus' Pastoral Instructions for the Year 1688.*

Indulge every one with civil toleration—*Archbishop Fénelon to the Duke of Burgundy.*

Compulsion in religion proves the spirit which dictates it to be an enemy to truth.—*Dirois, a Doctor of the Sorbonne*, b. vi. chap. iv.

Compulsion may make hypocrites, but never can persuade.—*Tillemont's Hist. Eccles.* tom. vi.

We have thought it conformable to equity and right reason to walk in the paths of the ancient church which never used violence to establish or extend religion.—*Remonstrance of the Parliament of Paris to Henry II.*

Experience teaches us that violence is more likely to irritate than to cure a distemper which is seated in the mind.—*De Thou's Epistle Dedicatory to Henry IV.*

Faith is not inspired by the edge of the sword.—*Cerisier, in the Reigns of Henry IV. and Louis XIII.*

It is a barbarous zeal which pretends to force any religion upon the mind, as if persuasion could be produced by constraint.—*Boulainvillier's State of France.*

It is with religion as with love; command can do nothing, constraint still less; nothing is so independent as love and belief.—*Amelot de la Houssaye on Cardinal Ossat's Letters.*

If Providence has been so kind to you as to give you a knowledge of the truth, receive it as an instance of His great goodness; but should those who enjoy the inheritance of their father hate those who do not?—*Spirit of Laws*, book xxv.

One might compose an immense volume of such passages. All our histories, discourses, sermons, moral treatises and catechisms of the present time abound with and inculcate this holy doctrine of indulgence. What fatality, what false reason, then, leads us to contradict by our practice the theory we are every day teaching? When our actions give the lie to our morals it must certainly proceed from our thinking it to our interest to practise the contrary of what we teach; but what advantage can arise from persecuting those who do not think in the same manner as we do, and thereby making ourselves hated by them? Once more, then, let me repeat it; there is the highest absurdity in persecution. It may be replied that those who found it to their interest to lay a restraint upon the consciences of others are not absurd in so doing. To such men I address the following chapter.

CHAPTER 16. A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A DYING MAN AND ONE IN GOOD HEALTH

An inhabitant of a country village lying at the point of death was visited by a person in good health, who came to insult him in his last moments, with the following speech:

“Wretch that thou art, think as I do this instant, sign this writing immediately, confess that five propositions are to be found in a book that neither thou nor I have ever read; adopt immediately the opinion of Lanfranc against Berengarius, and of St. Thomas against St. Bonaventura; join with the Council of Nice against the Council of Frankfort, and explain to me out of hand how the words ‘My Father is greater than I’ signify exactly ‘I am as great as He.’ Tell me also in what manner the Father communicates all His attributes to the Son, excepting the fatherhood, or I will have thy body thrown to the fowls of the air, thy children deprived of their inheritance, thy wife of her dowry and thy family turned out to beg their bread, which shall be refused them by those who are like myself.”

DYING MAN.—I scarcely understand what you say; your threats strike my ears confusedly, they trouble my mind and render my last moments terrifying. In the name of God have pity on me!

CRUEL MAN.—Pity! I can have none for thee, unless thou art exactly of my opinion.

DYING MAN.—Alas! you must be sensible that in these, my last moments, my senses are all impaired, the doors of my understanding are shut, my ideas are lost in confusion and I have hardly any sentiments remaining. Am I then in a condition to dispute?

CRUEL MAN.—Well, then, if thou canst not believe as I would have thee, only say that you do, and that will content me.

DYING MAN.—How! Would you have me perjure myself to please you, when I am going in an instant to appear before the judgment seat of that God who is the avenger of perjury?

CRUEL MAN.—No matter; thou wilt have the pleasure to be interred in holy ground, and thy wife and children will have wherewithal to maintain them after thy death. Die a hypocrite; hypocrisy is a very good thing; I have heard say it is the homage which vice pays to virtue. A little hypocrisy, friend, can’t cost you much.

DYING MAN.—Surely you must either not acknowledge a God, or hold Him very cheap, since you require me to tell a lie with my last breath, when you yourself must soon appear in judgment before Him and answer for that lie.

CRUEL MAN.—Insolent wretch! Dost thou say that I do not acknowledge a God?

DYING MAN.—Pardon me, brother; I rather fear you do not know Him. The God whom I adore lends me at this time an increase of strength to tell you with my dying words that if you believe in Him you ought to behave toward me with charity. He has given me my wife and children; do not you make them perish with misery. As for my body, do with it as seems good to you; I leave it at your disposal; but let me conjure you to believe in God.

CRUEL MAN.—Come, come; truce with your reasoning, and do as I bid you; I will have it so. I command you to do it.

DYING MAN.—But what advantage can you have in thus tormenting me?

CRUEL MAN.—What advantage? Why, if I can make you sign, it will be worth a good canonship to me.

DYING MAN.—Ah! brother; my last moment approaches; I am expiring, but I will pray to God to touch your heart that you may be converted.

CRUEL MAN.—The devil take the impertinent puppy; he has not signed after all! Well, I'll e'en sign for him; it is but a little forgery.

The following letter is a confirmation of the above doctrine:

CHAPTER 17. A LETTER FROM A BENEFICED PRIEST TO FATHER LETELLIER, THE JESUIT, DATED THE 6TH OF MAY, 1714

Reverend Father: The following is in obedience to the orders I received from your reverence to lay before you the most effectual means for delivering Jesus and His company from their enemies.

I believe there may be remaining at this time in the kingdom not more than five hundred thousand Huguenots; some say a million, others a million and a half; but let the number be what it will, the following is my advice, which, however, as in duty bound, I submit with all humility to your reverence's judgment.

In the first place, then, it will be very easy to seize in one day all the preachers, and to hang them all at one time and in one place, which will be not only a very edifying, but also a very entertaining exhibition to the people.

Secondly, I would have all the fathers and mothers who are heretics murdered in their beds, because the killing of them in the streets might occasion some little disturbance; besides, by that means, several of them might escape, which is above all to be prevented. This execution is a necessary corollary of our principles; for if we ought to kill a heretic, as so many of our great divines have incontestably proved, it is evident that we ought to kill them all without exception.

Thirdly, I would, the very next day, marry all the daughters to good Catholics, inasmuch as it would not be politic to depopulate the state so much after the late war; but as for the boys of fourteen and fifteen years of age, who have already imbibed bad principles, which we cannot hope to root out, 'tis my opinion that they should be all castrated to prevent the race from ever being reproduced. As for the other younger lads, they may be brought up in our colleges, where they may be whipped till they have learned by heart the works of Sanchez and Molinos.

Fourthly, I think under correction, the same method ought to be taken with all the Lutherans of Alsace, for I remember, in the year 1704, to have seen two old women of that country laugh on the day of our defeat at Blenheim.

Fifthly, What relates to the Jansenists will perhaps appear a little more difficult. I believe their numbers may amount to about six millions, a little more or less; but this ought not to give any alarm to a person of your reverence's disposition. I reckon among the Jansenists all the parliaments who have so unworthily maintained the liberties of the Gallican church. I leave it to your reverence to weigh with your usual prudence the most effectual methods for reducing these turbulent spirits. The Gunpowder Plot failed of the desired success through the weakness of one of the conspirators, who wanted to save the life of his friend; but, as your reverence has no

friend, the same inconvenience is not to be apprehended. You may very easily blow up all the parliaments in the kingdom with the composition called Pulvis Pyrius, invented by the monk Schwarz. By my calculation it will require upon an average thirty-six barrels of powder for each of the parliaments; now, if we multiply thirty-six, the number of barrels, by twelve, the number of parliaments, it will make four hundred and thirty-two barrels, which, at a hundred crowns per barrel, will amount to not quite a hundred and thirty thousand livres—a mere trifle for the reverend father-general.

The parliaments thus disposed of, you may bestow their places upon your congregationists, who are perfectly well versed in the laws of the realm.

Sixthly, It will be a very easy matter to poison the Cardinal de Noailles, who is a very simple, unsuspecting man.

Your reverence may take the same steps for conversion with several of the refractory prelates; and their bishoprics, by a brief from the pope, may be put into the hands of the Jesuits; thus all the bishops that remain, being staunch to the good cause, and they making a proper choice of curates, I, with your reverence's permission, would give the following advice:

Seventhly and lastly, As the Jansenists are said to take the sacrament one time in the year at least, which is at Easter, it would not be amiss to season the consecrated wafers with a little of that drug which was used to do justice upon the Emperor Henry VII. Some nice caviller may perhaps tell me that in this operation we may run some risk of poisoning the Molinists at the same time. There is some weight in this objection; but then it should be considered that there is no project without its inconveniences, nor any system but what threatens destruction in some part. And if we were to be stopped by these little difficulties we should never attain our end in anything; besides, as here we have in view the obtaining the greatest of all possible advantages, we should not suffer ourselves to be shocked, though it brings with it some bad consequences, especially as those consequences are of little or no consideration.

And, after all, we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves with, since it is proved that the Reformed, as they call themselves, and the Jansenists, have all of them their portion in hell; therefore, we only put them in possession of their inheritance a little sooner.

It is as evident that heaven belongs of right to the Molinists; therefore by destroying them by mistake, and without any evil intention, we hasten their happiness; and are in both cases the ministers of Providence.

As to those who may be a little shocked at the number to be thus made away with, your reverence may remark to them that from the first flourishing days of the church to the year 1707—that is to say, in about fourteen hundred years—religion has

occasioned the massacre of upwards of fifty millions of persons; whereas by my proposal not above six millions and a half will be put to death by the halter, the dagger, or poison.

But perhaps it may be objected that my calculation is not just, and that I have committed an error against the Rule of Three; inasmuch as, that if in fourteen hundred years there perished fifty millions of souls on account of some trifling disputes in divinity, that makes only thirty-five thousand seven hundred and fourteen and some little fraction in a year, and consequently that by my method an overplus of six millions sixty-four thousand two hundred and eighty-five and some fractions are put to death in the current year. But, indeed, this is a very childish quibble; nay, I'll even call it impious; for is it not plain that by my method I save the lives of all the Catholics, so long as the world shall last? But, in short, there would be no end of answering every frivolous objection.

I am, with the most profound respect, reverend father, your reverence's most humble, most devout, and most humane

R———,

Native of Angoulême,

Prefect of the Congregation.

This glorious scheme, however, could not be carried into execution, because it required considerable time to make the necessary dispositions, and that Father Letellier was banished the year following. But as it is right to examine both sides of an argument, it will be proper to inquire in what cases it may be lawful to follow in part the scheme of the reverend father's correspondent. It would seem rather too severe to execute it in all its parts; let us therefore examine in what cases we ought to break upon the wheel, to hang, or to make galley-slaves of those who differ from us in opinion. This shall be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 18. THE ONLY CASES IN WHICH NON-TOLERATION MAKES PART OF THE HUMAN LAW

For a government not to have a right to punish men for their errors, it is necessary that those errors should not be crimes; and they are crimes only when they disturb the public tranquillity; which they do whenever they inspire enthusiasm. It is necessary therefore that men should begin by laying aside enthusiasm in order to deserve toleration.

If a number of young Jesuits, knowing that the church holds all reprobates and heretics in detestation, and that the opinion of the Jansenists having been condemned by a bull this sect is consequently reprobate, thereupon go and set fire to the house of the fathers of the oratory, because Quesnel, one of that body, was a Jansenist; it is clear that the government would be obliged to punish those Jesuits.

In like manner, if these latter have been found to teach the most reprehensible doctrines, and if their institution appears contrary to the laws of the kingdom, it becomes necessary to abolish their society, and of Jesuits to make them useful citizens; which, in fact, so far from being an oppression upon them, as has been pretended, is a real good done them; for where is the great oppression of being obliged to wear a short coat instead of a long gown, or to be free instead of being a slave? In time of peace whole regiments are broken without complaining. Why, then, should the Jesuits make such an outcry, when they are broken for the sake of peace?

Were the Franciscans in a transport of holy zeal for the Virgin Mary, to go and pull down the church of the Dominicans, who hold Mary to have been born in original sin, the government would then be obliged to treat the Franciscans much in the same manner it has done the Jesuits.

The same argument will hold good with regard to the Lutherans and Calvinists; for let them say, if they please, we follow the dictates of our consciences; it is more profitable to obey God than man; we are the only true flock, and therefore ought to cut off all the wolves. It is evident that in this case they themselves are the wolves.

One of the most astonishing examples of enthusiasm was in a little sect in Denmark, founded on one of the best principles in the world; for these people endeavored to procure the eternal happiness of all their brethren; but the consequences of this principle were very singular. As they believed that all the young children who died without baptism were damned, and that those who had the happiness to die immediately after receiving that sacrament enter into eternal happiness, they went forth and murdered all the young children of both sexes lately baptized, whom they could meet with. By this action they doubtless procured the little innocents the greatest of all felicity, by preserving them at once from sin, the miseries of this life,

and hell, and sending them certainly to heaven. But these people, in the excess of their charitable zeal, did not consider that it is forbidden to do evil that good may come thereof; that they had no right over the lives of these infants; that the greatest part of fathers and mothers are so carnal as to desire rather to keep their children about them than to see their throats cut, though it was to send them to heaven; and, lastly, that it is the duty of the magistrate to punish murder, though committed with a good intent.

It would seem that the Jews had the greatest right of any persons to rob and murder us; for although the Old Testament abounds with examples of toleration and indulgence, yet are there several instances of the contrary, and some very severe laws. God did at times command his people to kill all idolaters, reserving only the young women fit for the nuptial state. They look upon us as idolaters; and notwithstanding that we at present tolerate them, they might certainly, had they the power in their hands, cut us all off, excepting our young women.

Moreover, they would be under an indispensable obligation to exterminate the whole Turkish race. This speaks for itself, for the Turks are at present in possession of the countries of the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, etc., all of whom were laid under a curse, and their country, which was about five and twenty leagues in extent, was given to the Jews by several successive covenants; consequently they ought to resume possession of their own, which the Turks have usurped from them for upwards of a thousand years. But if the Jews were to reason in this manner nowadays, it is pretty certain we should make them no other answer than by impaling them alive.

These are the only cases in which persecution appears reasonable.

CHAPTER 19. ACCOUNT OF A CONTROVERSIAL DISPUTE WHICH HAPPENED IN CHINA

In the beginning of the reign of the great Emperor Cam-hi, a mandarin of the city of Canton, hearing a great noise and outcry in the house adjoining that he dwelt in, sent to know if they were murdering any one; but was told that it was only a Danish almoner, a Dutch chaplain, and a Jesuit disputing together; upon which he ordered them to be brought before him, and inquired of them the occasion of their quarrel?

The Jesuit, who was the first that spoke, said that it was a very grievous thing to him, who was always in the right, to have to do with people who were always in the wrong; that he at first began to reason with them with the greatest coolness; but that, at length, he could not but own his patience had left him.

The mandarin then represented to all three, with all imaginable candor, how necessary it was to observe decorum and good manners even in disputation; he told them that no one ever gave way to heat or passion in China, and desired to be informed of the nature of their dispute.

“My lord,” said the Jesuit, “I take you for judge in this affair. These two gentlemen refuse to submit to the decisions of the Council of Trent.”

“I am surprised at that,” replied the mandarin. Then turning towards the two refractory parties: “Gentlemen,” said he, “you ought to show a deference to the opinion of a great assembly. I do not know what the Council of Trent is, but a number of persons must always have opportunities of knowing better than one single man. No one ought to imagine that he knows more than all others, and that reason dwells only with him; this is the doctrine of our great Confucius; therefore, if you would take my advice, abide by what the Council of Trent has decreed.”

The Dane then began to speak in his turn. “Your excellence,” said he, “has delivered yourself with great wisdom and prudence; we have all that respect for great assemblies that we ought; and accordingly we submit entirely to the opinions of several councils that were held at the same time with that of Trent.”

“Oh! if that is the case,” said the mandarin, “I ask your pardon; you may doubtless be in the right. So, then, it seems you and the Dutchman are of one opinion against the Jesuit.”

“Not in the least,” answered the Dutchman; “this man here,” pointing to the Dane, “entertains notions almost as extravagant as those of the Jesuit, who pretends to so much mildness before you. ‘Sblood! there is no bearing this with patience.”

“I cannot conceive what you mean,” said the mandarin; “are you not all three Christians? Are you not all three come to teach the Christian religion in our empire? And ought you not consequently have all the same tenets?”

“You see how it is, my lord,” said the Jesuit; “these two men here are mortal enemies of each other; and yet both of them dispute against me; this makes it clear that they are both in the wrong, and that reason is on my side.”

“I do not think it is so very clear,” replied the mandarin; “for it may very well happen that you are all three in the wrong. But I should be glad to hear your arguments singly.”

The Jesuit then made a long discourse, while the Dutchman and the Dane at every period shrugged up their shoulders, and the mandarin could not make anything of what he heard. The Dane now took the lead in his turn, while his two adversaries looked upon him with manifest signs of contempt; and the mandarin, when he had finished, remained as wise as before. The Dutchman had the same success. At length they began to talk all three together, and broke out into the most scurrilous revilings. The honest mandarin could hardly get in a word. At length he dismissed them, saying: “If you expect to have your doctrine tolerated here, begin by showing an example of it to one another.”

At leaving the house the Jesuit met with a Dominican missionary, to whom he related what had passed; and told him that he had gained his cause; “for you may be assured,” added he, “that truth will always prevail.” The Dominican replied: “Had I been there, friend, you would not so easily have gained your cause; for I should have proved you to be an idolater and a liar.” Upon this, there arose a violent dispute between them; and the Jesuit and the friar went to fisticuffs. The mandarin being informed of this scandalous behavior ordered them both to be sent to prison. A sub-mandarin asked his excellence how long he would please to have them remain in confinement. “Till they are both agreed,” said the judge. “Then, my lord,” answered the sub-mandarin, “they will remain in prison all their days.” “Well, then,” said the mandarin, “let them stay till they forgive one another.” “That they will never do,” rejoined the deputy; “I know them very well.” “Indeed!” said the mandarin; “then let it be till they appear so to do.”

CHAPTER 20. WHETHER IT IS OF SERVICE TO INDULGE THE PEOPLE IN SUPERSTITION

Such is the weakness and perversity of the human race that it is undoubtedly more eligible for them to be subject to every possible kind of superstition, provided it is not of a bloody nature, than to live without religion. Man has always stood in need of a curb; and though it was certainly very ridiculous to sacrifice to fauns, satyrs, and naïads, yet it was more reasonable and advantageous to adore even those fantastic images of the deity than to be given up to atheism. An atheist of any capacity, and invested with power, would be as dreadful a scourge to the rest of mankind as the most bloody enthusiast.

When men have not true notions of the Deity, false ideas must supply their place, like as in troublesome and calamitous times we are obliged to trade with base money when good is not to be procured. The heathens were afraid of committing crimes, lest they should be punished by their false gods. The Malabar dreads the anger of his pagods. Wherever there is a fixed community, religion is necessary; the laws are a curb upon open crimes, and religion upon private ones.

But when once men have embraced a pure and holy religion, superstition then becomes not only needless, but very hurtful. Those whom God has been pleased to nourish with bread ought not to be fed upon acorns.

Superstition is to religion what astrology is to astronomy, the foolish daughter of a wise mother. These two daughters, however, have for a long time governed this world with uncontrollable sway.

In those dark and barbarous times amongst us, when there were hardly two feudal lords who had a New Testament in their houses, it might be pardonable to present the common people with fables; I mean those feudal lords, their ignorant wives, and brutish vassals. They were then made to believe that St. Christopher carried the child Jesus on his shoulders from one side of the river to the other; they were entertained with stories of witches and witchcraft; they readily believed that St. Genou cured the gout, and St. Claire sore eyes. The children believed in hobgoblins, and their fathers in St. Francis' girdle; and relics swarmed out of number.

The common people have continued to be infected with the rust of these superstitions, even after religion became more enlightened. It is well known that when M. de Noailles, bishop of Châlons, ordered the pretended relic of the holy navel to be taken away and thrown into the fire, the whole city of Châlons joined in a prosecution against him; but he, who had resolution equal to his piety, soon brought the people of his diocese to believe that one may adore Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth, without having his navel in a church.

Those whom we call Jansenists were not a little instrumental in rooting out by degrees, from the minds of the greatest part of the nation, the many absurd notions which were the disgrace of our holy religion. And it no longer continued to be thought sufficient to repeat the prayer of thirty days to the Blessed Virgin, to obtain whatever one should ask, and sin with impunity.

At length the lower kind of people began to imagine that it was not St. Geneviève who gave rain or caused it to cease, but God Himself, who disposed the elements according to His good will and pleasure. The monks have been astonished to find their saints no longer perform miracles; and if the writers of the life of St. Francis Xavier were to come again into the world they would not venture to assert that their saint raised nine people from the dead; that he was at one and the same time both on the sea and on shore; or that a crab brought him his crucifix, which he had dropped out of his hand into the water.

It has happened much the same with regard to excommunications. Our French historians tell us that when King Robert was excommunicated by Pope Gregory V. for having married the Princess Bertha, who was his godmother, his domestics threw all the victuals that came from his table out of the windows, and that his queen Bertha was delivered of a goose as a punishment for this incestuous alliance. It is not likely that the pages of the presence to a king of France nowadays would throw his dinner into the streets if he should be excommunicated, nor would it be very readily believed that the queen was brought to bed of a bird.

If there are some few convulsionists yet to be met with in an obscure corner of the town it is a kind of lousy disease that infects only the dregs of the people. Reason is every day making her way into the tradesman’s counting house, as well as into the palaces of our nobility. It behooves us then to cultivate the fruits of this reason, more especially as it is impossible to prevent them from sprouting forth. France, after having been enlightened by a Pascal, a Nicole, an Arnaud, a Bossuet, a Descartes, a Gassendi, a Bayle, a Fontenelle, and other bright geniuses like them, is no longer to be governed as in the times of Garasse and Menot.

If the masters of error, I mean the great masters who were so long a time prayed to and reverenced for brutalizing the human species, were at present to enjoin us to believe that the seed must rot in the earth before it can sprout; that this earth continues immovable on its basis without revolving about the sun; that the tides are not the natural effect of gravitation; that the rainbow is not formed by the refraction and reflection of the rays of light, etc., and were they to bring certain passages of Scripture badly understood and worse interpreted to authenticate their ordinances, how would they be looked upon by every person of common capacity? Would fools be thought too harsh a name to be imposed on them? But if they should have recourse to compulsion and persecution to establish their insolent ignorance, would not madmen and butchers be deemed a proper appellation?

The more that monkish superstition becomes contemptible, the more bishops are respected and the clergy in general esteemed. They do good in their professions, whereas the monkish superstition of foreign climates occasioned a great deal of mischief. But of all superstitions, that of hating our neighbor on account of his opinion is surely the most dangerous! And will it not be granted me that there would be more sense and reason in adoring the holy navel, the holy prepuce, and the milk and the robe of the Blessed Virgin, than to detest and persecute our brother?

CHAPTER 21. VIRTUE IS BETTER THAN LEARNING

The fewer dogmas, the fewer disputes; and the fewer disputes, the fewer calamities: if this is not true I am much mistaken.

Religion is instituted to make us happy in this life and the next. But what is required to make us happy in the life to come? To be just. And in this? To be merciful and forbearing.

It would be the height of madness to pretend to bring all mankind to think exactly in the same manner in regard to metaphysics. We might, with much greater ease, subject the whole universe by force of arms than subject the minds of all the inhabitants of one single village.

But Euclid found no difficulty in persuading every one of the truths of geometry. And why? Because there is not one of them which is not a self-evident corollary on this simple axiom: “Two and two make four.” But is it not altogether the same with relation to the complicated maxims in metaphysics and divinity.

Eusebius and Socrates tell us that when Bishop Alexander and Arius the priest began first to dispute in what manner the Logos or word proceeded from the Father, the Emperor Constantine wrote to them in the following terms: “You are great fools to dispute about things you do not understand.”

If the two contending parties had been wise enough to acknowledge that the emperor was in the right Christendom would not have been drenched in blood for upwards of three centuries.

And, indeed, what can be more ridiculous, or rather detestable, than to address mankind in this manner: “My friends, it is not sufficient that you are faithful subjects, dutiful children, tender parents, and upright neighbors; that you live in the continual practice of virtue; that you are grateful, benevolent, and generous, and worship the Saviour of the world in peace; it is furthermore required of you that you should know how a thing may be begotten from all eternity, without being made from all eternity; and if you cannot distinguish the homoousian in the hypostasis, we declare to you that you are damned to all eternity; and in the meantime we shall begin by cutting your throats”?

If such a decision as this had been presented to Archimedes, Posidonius, Varro, Cato, or Cicero, what answer do you think they would have given to it?

Constantine, however, did not persevere in silencing the two parties; he might easily have summoned the chiefs of the disputes before him, and have demanded of them by what authority they disturbed the peace of mankind. “Are you,” he might have said, “possessed of the genealogy of the heavenly family? What is it to you whether

the Son was made or begotten, provided that you are faithful to Him; that you preach a sound doctrine, and practise that doctrine if you can? I have committed many faults in my lifetime, and so have you; I have been ambitious, so have you; it has cost me many falsehoods and cruelties to attain to the empire; I have murdered my nearest relative that stood in my way; but I now repent, and am willing to make atonement for my crime by restoring peace to the Roman Empire; do not you prevent me from doing the only good action which can possibly make my former cruel ones forgotten; but rather assist me to end my days in peace." Perhaps Constantine might not, by this speech, have prevailed over the minds of the disputants, and perhaps he might rather be pleased with presiding in a council in a long crimson robe, and his forehead glittering with jewels.

This, however, opened a passage to all those dreadful calamities which overran the West from Asia. Out of every contested verse there issued a fury armed with a quibble and a poniard, who inspired mankind at once with folly and cruelty. The Huns, the Heruli, the Goths, and Vandals, who came afterwards, did infinitely less mischief; and the greatest they did was that of afterwards engaging in the same fatal disputes.

CHAPTER 22. OF UNIVERSAL TOLERATION

It does not require any great art or studied elocution to prove that Christians ought to tolerate one another. Nay, I shall go still farther and say that we ought to look upon all men as our brethren. How! call a Turk, a Jew, and a Siamese, my brother? Yes, doubtless; for are we not all children of the same parent, and the creatures of the same Creator?

But these people hold us in contempt, and call us idolaters! Well, then, I should tell them that they were to blame. And I fancy that I could stagger the headstrong pride of an imaum, or a talapoin, were I to address them in the following manner:

“This little globe, which is no more than a point, rolls, together with many other globes, in that immensity of space in which we are all alike confounded. Man, who is an animal, about five feet high, is certainly a very inconsiderable part of the creation; but one of those hardly visible beings says to others of the same kind inhabiting another spot of the globe: Hearken to me, for the God of all these worlds has enlightened me. There are about nine hundred millions of us little insects who inhabit the earth, but my ant-hill is alone cherished by God, who holds all the rest in horror and detestation; those who live with me upon my spot will alone be happy, and all the rest eternally wretched.”

They would here stop me short and ask, “What madman could have made so ridiculous a speech?” I should then be obliged to answer them, “It is yourselves.” After which I should endeavor to pacify them, but perhaps that would not be very easy.

I might next address myself to the Christians and venture to say, for example, to a Dominican, one of the judges of the inquisition: “Brother, you know that every province in Italy has a jargon of its own and that they do not speak in Venice and Bergamo as they do in Florence. The Academy della Crusca has fixed the standard of the Italian language; its dictionary is an unerring rule, and Buon Matei’s grammar is an infallible guide, from neither of which we ought to depart; but do you think that the president of the academy, or in his absence Buon Matei, could in conscience order the tongues of all the Venetians and Bergamese, who persisted in their own country dialect, to be cut out?”

The inquisitor would, perhaps, make me this reply: “There is a very wide difference; here the salvation of your soul is concerned; and it is entirely for your good that the directory of the inquisition ordains that you shall be seized, upon the deposition of a single person, though of the most infamous character; that you shall have no person to plead for you, nor even be acquainted with the name of your accuser; that the inquisitor shall promise you favor, and afterwards condemn you; that he shall make you undergo five different kinds of torture, and that at length you shall be either

whipped, sent to the galleys, or burned at the stake;[66] Father Ivonet, and the doctors, Chucalon, Zanchinus, Campegius, Royas, Telinus, Gomarus, Diabarus, and Gemelinus are exactly of this opinion, consequently this pious practice will not admit of contradiction."

To all which I should take the liberty of making the following reply: "Dear brother, you may perhaps be in the right, and I am perfectly well convinced of the great benefit you intend me; but may I not be saved without all this?"

It is true that these horrible absurdities do not every day deform the face of the earth; but they have been very frequent, and one might easily collect instances enough to make a volume much larger than that of the Holy Gospels, which condemn such practices. It is not only very cruel to persecute in this short life those who do not think in the same manner as we do, but I very much doubt if there is not an impious boldness in pronouncing them eternally damned. In my opinion, it little befits such insects of a summer's day as we are thus to anticipate the decrees of Providence. I am very far from opposing that maxim of the Church, that "out of her pale there is no salvation"; on the contrary, I respect that and every other part of her doctrine; but, after all, can we be supposed to be intimately acquainted with the ways of God, or to fathom the whole depth of His mercy? Is it not permitted us to hope in Him, as well as to fear Him? Is it not sufficient if we are faithful sons of the Church, without every individual presuming to wrest the power out of the hand of God, and determine, before Him, the future destiny of our fellow creatures?

When we wear mourning for a king of England, Denmark, Sweden, or Prussia, do we say that we are in mourning for a damned soul that is burning in hell? There are about forty millions of inhabitants in Europe who are not members of the Church of Rome; should we say to every one of them, "Sir, as I look upon you to be infallibly damned, I shall neither eat, drink, converse, nor have any connections with you?"

Is there an ambassador of France who, when he is presented to the grand seignior for an audience, will seriously say to himself, his sublime highness will infallibly burn to all eternity for having submitted to be circumcised? If he really thought that the grand seignior was a mortal enemy to God, and the object of divine vengeance, could he converse with such a person; nay, indeed, ought he to be sent to him? But how could we carry on any commerce, or perform any of the civil duties of society, if we were convinced that we were conversing with persons destined to eternal damnation?

O ye different worshippers of a God of mercy! if ye have cruel hearts, if, while you adore that Deity who has placed the whole of His law in these few words, "Love God and your neighbor," you have loaded that pure and holy law with sophistical and unintelligible disputes, if you have lighted the flames of discord sometimes for a new word, and at others for a single letter only; if you have annexed eternal punishment

[66] See that excellent book, entitled, "The Manual of the Inquisition."

to the omission of some few words, or of certain ceremonies which other people cannot comprehend, I must say to you with tears of compassion for mankind: “Transport yourselves with me to that great instant in which all men are to receive judgment from the hand of God, who will then do unto every one according to their works, and with me behold all the dead of past ages appearing in His presence. Are you very sure that our heavenly Father and Creator will say to the wise and virtuous Confucius, to the great legislator Solon, to Pythagoras, Zaleucus, Socrates, Plato, the divine Antoninus, the good Trajan, to Titus, the delight of human kind, and to many others who have been the models of human kind: ‘Depart from me, wretches! into torments that know neither alleviation nor end; but are, like Himself, everlasting. But you, my well-beloved servants, John Châtel, Ravaillac, Cartouche, Damiens, etc., who have died according to the rules prescribed by the Church, enter into the joy of your Lord, and sit forever at my right hand in majesty and glory.’”

Methinks I see you start with horror at these words; however, as they have escaped me, let them pass; I shall say nothing more to you.

CHAPTER 23. AN ADDRESS TO THE DEITY

No longer then do I address myself to men, but to Thee, God of all beings, of all worlds, and of all ages; if it may be permitted weak creatures lost in immensity and imperceptible to the rest of the universe, to presume to petition Thee for aught, who hast given plenty of all things, and whose decrees are immutable as eternal. Deign to look with an eye of pity on the errors annexed to our natures! let not these errors prove the sources of misery to us! Thou hast not given us hearts to hate, nor hands to kill one another; grant then that we may mutually aid and assist each other to support the burden of this painful and transitory life! May the trifling differences in the garments that cover our frail bodies, in the mode of expressing our insignificant thoughts, in our ridiculous customs and our imperfect laws, in our idle opinions, and in our several conditions and situations, that appear so disproportionate in our eyes, and all are equal in Thine; in a word, may the slight variations that are found amongst the atoms called men not be made use of by us as signals of mutual hatred and persecution! May those who worship Thee by the light of tapers at noonday bear charitably with those who content themselves with the light of that glorious planet Thou hast placed in the midst of the heavens! May those who dress themselves in a robe of white linen to teach their hearers that Thou art to be loved and feared, not detest or revile those who teach the same doctrine in long cloaks of black wool! May it be accounted the same to adore Thee in a dialect formed from an ancient or a modern language! May those who, clothed in vestments of crimson or violet color, rule over a little parcel of that heap of dirt called the world, and are possessed of a few round fragments of a certain metal, enjoy without pride or insolence what they call grandeur and riches, and may others look on them without envy; for Thou knowest, O God, that there is nothing in all these vanities proper to inspire envy or pride.

May all men remember that they are brethren! May they alike abhor that tyranny which seeks to subject the freedom of the will, as they do the rapine which tears from the arms of industry the fruits of its peaceful labors! And if the scourge of war is not to be avoided, let us not mutually hate and destroy each other in the midst of peace; but rather make use of the few moments of our existence to join in praising, in a thousand different languages, from one extremity of the world to the other, Thy goodness, O all-merciful Creator, to whom we are indebted for that existence!

CHAPTER 24. POSTSCRIPT

While I was employed in writing this treatise, purely with a desire to make mankind more benevolent and charitable, another author was using his pen to the very contrary purpose; for every one has his particular way of thinking. This writer has published a small code of persecution under the title of “The Harmony of Religion and Humanity”; but this last word seems to be an error of the press, and should be read “Inhumanity.”

The author of this holy libel takes St. Augustine for his example and authority, who, after having preached charity and forbearance, afterwards taught the doctrine of persecution, because he then had the upper hand and was naturally of a changeable disposition. He also quotes M. Bossuet, the bishop of Meaux, who persecuted the famous Fénelon, archbishop of Cambray, whom he accused of having said in print that God was well worthy to be loved for His own sake.

I will readily grant that Bossuet was a very eloquent writer, and it must also be confessed that the bishop of Hippo[67] is frequently inconsistent, and in general more dry and barren than the rest of the African writers; and I must take the liberty of addressing them both in the words of Armande, in Molière’s “Learned Ladies”: “If we should imitate any person, it certainly should be in the most pleasing part of their character.” I should say to the bishop of Hippo: “My lord, as you have had two opinions, your lordship will be kind enough to suffer me to abide by your first, since I really think it the best.”

To the bishop of Meaux I shall say: “My lord, you are certainly a very great man, and, in my opinion, have to the full as much learning as St. Augustine, and are far superior to him in eloquence; but then, my lord, why did you so distress your brother prelate, who had as much eloquence as yourself, though in another kind, and whose disposition was more amiable than yours.”

The author of this “Treatise on Inhumanity”—for so I shall call it—is neither a Bossuet nor an Augustine, but seems admirably well qualified for an inquisitor; I wish he were at the head of that noble tribunal in Goa. Besides, he is a politician, and parades it in his book with several great maxims of state. “If you have to deal with any considerable number of heretics,” says he, “it will be necessary to use gentle methods, and try to bring them over by persuasion; but if they are only a few in number, then make free use of the gibbet and the galleys; you will find the advantage of it.” This is the good prelate’s own advice in the 89th and 90th pages of his work.

[67] Now Bona, a town of Constantine in Africa. St. Augustine was bishop of this see above forty years. It now belongs to Algiers.

Heaven be praised, I am an orthodox Catholic, and therefore am in no danger of what the Huguenots call martyrdom; but if ever this bishop should come to be prime minister, as he seems to flatter himself in his libels, I give him my promise that I will set out for England the very day his commission is signed.

In the meantime, we ought to be thankful to Providence that those of his principles are always wretched reasoners. This writer has not scrupled to quote Bayle among the advocates for non-toleration, which is being equally sensible and honest; for, because Bayle agrees that it is necessary to punish incendiaries and rogues, our bishop directly concludes that we ought to persecute with fire and sword every honest and peaceable person. See page 98.

Almost the whole of his book is no other than a copy of the apology for St. Bartholomew's day. It is the apologist himself or his echo. But be this matter as it will, it is devoutly to be wished that neither the master nor the pupil may ever be at the head of an administration.

But if ever such a thing should come to pass, let me beg leave to present them beforehand with the following hint in regard to a passage in the ninety-third page of the bishop's holy libel:

"Is the welfare of the whole nation to be sacrificed to the ease of only the twentieth part?"

Let us suppose then for once that there are twenty Roman Catholics in France to one Huguenot, I am by no means for the Huguenots eating these twenty Catholics; but, at the same time, is there any reason why the twenty Catholics should eat the Huguenot? Besides, why should we hinder this latter from marrying? Are there not many bishops, abbots and monks that have estates in Dauphiny, Gevaudan, Agde and Carcassonne? And have not most of these farmers to manage those estates who do not believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation? Is it not the interest of these bishops and others that the farmers should have numerous families? And should one be permitted to have children that takes the sacrament in both kinds? Surely there is neither justice nor common honesty in this!

"The revocation of the Edict of Nantes," says my author, "has not been productive of so great inconveniences as has been generally alleged."

I must own if any have added to the number of bad effects that act produced, they must have greatly exaggerated; but then it is the common fault of all historians to exaggerate, as it is of all controversial writers to disguise the greatest part of those evils with which they are reproachable. But for once let us pin our faith neither upon the doctors of the Sorbonne nor the preachers of Amsterdam. Let us take for judges in this matter those who have had the best opportunities of being acquainted with what they wrote about; and in the first place I shall cite the Count d'Avaux,

ambassador from France to the States-General during the years 1685, 1686, 1687, and 1688.

In the hundred and eighty-first page of the fifth volume of his works he says that one man only offered to discover upwards of twenty millions of livres that the persecuted Huguenots had found means to send out of France. Louis XIV., in answer to this, writes to M. d'Avaux: "The accounts which I daily receive of the prodigious numbers of those who are converted convince me that in a short time the most obstinate will follow the example of the others."

This letter of the king's plainly shows that he was firmly persuaded of the greatness of his power. He was accustomed to hear said to him every morning: "Sire, you are the greatest monarch upon earth; you have but to declare your opinion and the whole world will be proud to follow it." Pelisson, who had accumulated a prodigious fortune in the place of head clerk of the treasury, who had been three years confined in the Bastille as an accomplice with Fouquet, who, changing his religion, was from a Calvinist made a Roman, a deacon and a beneficed priest, who composed hymns for the mass and verses to Chloe, and who had got the post of comptroller and converter in chief of the heretics; this very Pelisson, I say, used to produce every morning a long list of pretended abjurations purchased at the rate of seven or eight crowns apiece, and made his prince believe that he could, whenever he pleased, convert the whole Mahometan empire at the same price. In short, every one was in league to impose upon him; how then was it possible for him to avoid being deceived?

This very M. d'Avaux also acquaints the court that one Vincent kept upwards of five hundred workmen employed in the neighborhood of Angoulême, and that it would be of great prejudice to the nation should they quit the kingdom. Vol. v., page 194.

The count likewise mentions two regiments at that time actually being raised by French refugee officers for the service of the prince of Orange; he observes that the entire crews of three French ships of war had deserted and entered into the same service, and that besides the two regiments above mentioned, the prince was forming a company of cadet refugees, who were to be commanded by two refugee captains. Page 240. The same ambassador in another letter to M. de Seignelay, dated the 9th of May, 1686, says that he can no longer conceal the uneasiness it gives him to see the manufactures of France transported into Holland, where they will be established, never more to return.

Add to these incontestable evidences the testimonies of the several intendants of the kingdom in 1698, and then let any one judge whether the revocation of the Edict of Nantes has not done more harm than good, notwithstanding the opinion of the worthy author of the "Harmony of Religion and Inhumanity."

A Marshal of France well known for his superior abilities some years ago made use of the following expression: “I know not whether the practice of dragooning may ever have been necessary, but I am sure it is very necessary to lay it aside.”

And here I must confess that I was apprehensive. I had gone rather too far in publishing the letter from a priest to Father Letellier, in which the use of gunpowder is so humanely proposed. I said to myself, people will not believe me; they will certainly think this letter is a forged piece; but luckily my scruples were entirely eased when in perusing the “Harmony of Religion and Inhumanity,” I came to the following Christian and charitable passage:

“The entire extirpation of the Protestants in France would not weaken that kingdom more than a plentiful bleeding would a patient of a sound constitution.” Page 149.

Here this pious minister of Christ, who, but a few pages before, says that the Protestants make about a twentieth part of the nation, is for shedding the blood of that twentieth part, and advises the operation with as much unconcern as he would the taking away two or three ounces from the arm of a plethoric person! Heaven preserve us and him from the other three-twentieths!

Now, if this worthy prelate is for destroying the twentieth part of the nation at one stroke, might not Father Letellier’s friend and correspondent as well have proposed the blowing up, stabbing or poisoning the one-third? Hence then it appears very probable that such a letter was really written to Letellier.

Our pious author concludes upon the whole that persecution is an excellent thing; “for,” says he, “we do not find it absolutely condemned by our Saviour.” Neither has our Saviour expressly condemned those who may set fire to the four corners of Paris; but is that a reason for canonizing all incendiaries?

In this manner, while the gentle voice of Nature is everywhere pleading the cause of charity and benevolence, Enthusiasm, her avowed enemy, is continually howling against it; and while Peace opens her calm bosom to all mankind, Persecution is busied in forging weapons for their destruction. Let it be your care, then, O ye princely arbiters, who have restored peace to the world, to pass sentence between the spirit of mutual love and harmony and that of discord and bloodshed.

CHAPTER 25. SEQUEL AND CONCLUSION

On the 7th of March, 1763, a council of state being held at Versailles, at which all the great ministers assisted and the chancellor sat as president, M. de Crosne, one of the masters of requests, made a report of the affair of the Calas family with all the impartiality of a judge, and the precision of one perfectly well acquainted with the case, and with the plain truth and inspired eloquence of an orator and a statesman, which is alone suitable to such an assembly. The gallery was filled with a prodigious number of persons of all ranks, who impatiently waited the decision of the council. In a short time a deputation was sent to the king to acquaint him that the council had come to a unanimous resolution: that the parliament of Toulouse should transmit to them the whole account of its proceedings, together with the reasons on which it had framed the sentence condemning John Calas to be broken on the wheel; when his majesty was pleased to concur in the decree of the council.

Justice and humanity then still continue to reside amongst mankind! and principally in the council of a king beloved, and deserving so to be; who, with his ministers, his chancellor and all the members of his council, have not disdained to employ their time in weighing all the circumstances relating to the sufferings of a private family with as much attention as if it had been the most interesting affair of war or peace; whilst the judges have shown themselves inspired by a love of equity and a tender regard to the interests of their fellow-subjects. All praise be given therefore to that Merciful Being, the only giver of integrity and every other virtue.

And here we take occasion to declare that we never had the least acquaintance with the unfortunate man who was condemned on the most frivolous evidence by the court of justice of Toulouse, in direct contradiction to the ordinances of our king and the laws of all nations, nor with his son, Mark Antony, the extraordinary manner of whose death led the judges into the error they committed; nor with the mother, whose sufferings call aloud for compassion, nor yet with her innocent daughter, who, together with her, travelled upwards of six hundred miles to lay their virtue and distresses at the foot of the throne.

The God in whose presence we declare this knows that we have been actuated solely by the love of justice, mercy, and truth, in delivering our thoughts in the manner we have done on toleration, in regard to John Calas, who fell a victim to non-toleration and persecution.

We had not the least intent to offend the eight judges of Toulouse in saying that they were mistaken, as the council of state itself supposes them to have been; on the contrary, we have opened a way for them to vindicate themselves to all Europe by acknowledging that equivocal circumstances, and the clamor of a headstrong and enraged populace, had biassed their judgment; and by asking pardon of the widow and repairing as much as in them lies the ruin they have brought upon an innocent

family, by adding to the number of those who succor them in their affliction. They have put the father to death unjustly; let them then be as fathers to his children, provided those children are willing to accept of this poor token of repentance from them. It would be infinitely to the honor of the judges to make such an offer, and to that of the injured family to refuse it.

But it principally behooves the Sieur David, capitol of Toulouse, to set the example of remorse and penitence, who was the first to raise this persecution against innocence, and who insulted the hapless father of a family when expiring on the scaffold. This was indeed an unparalleled act of cruelty; but as God is willing to show mercy and forgiveness it is the duty of mortals to pardon in like manner those who make atonement for their offences.

I have received a letter from a friend in Languedoc, dated the 20th of February, 1763, of which the following is an extract:

“Your treatise on toleration appears to be full of humanity and truth; but I am afraid it will rather hurt than serve the Calas family. It may gall the eight judges who were for the sentence, and they may apply to the parliament to have your book burnt; besides, the bigots, of whom you are sensible there is always a considerable number, will oppose the voice of reason with the clamors of prejudice,” etc.

My answer was as follows:

“The eight judges of Toulouse may, if they please, have my book burnt. It will cost them very little trouble, since the “Provincial Letters,” which had infinitely superior merit to anything of mine, were condemned to the same fate. Every one, you know, is at liberty to burn in his own house such books as he does not like.

“My treatise cannot possibly do either hurt or good to the Calas family, with whom I have not the least acquaintance. The king’s council is no less resolute than impartial; it judges according to law and equity of those things which fall properly under its cognizance; but it will not interfere with a common pamphlet, written upon a subject altogether foreign from the affair under consideration.

“If a hundred volumes in folio should be written in condemnation or vindication of the judges of Toulouse, or of toleration, neither the council nor any other court of justice would look upon these as law matters.

“I readily agree with you that there are numbers of enthusiasts who will set up the cry against me, but at the same time I do insist that I shall have as many sensible readers who will make use of their reason.

“I hear that the Parliament of Toulouse and some other courts of justice have a method of proceeding peculiar to themselves. They admit fourths, thirds, and sixths of a proof; so that with six hearsays on one side, three on the other, and four-fourths of a presumption, they frame three complete proofs; and in consequence of this

curious demonstration will condemn you a man to be broken upon the wheel without mercy. Now, the least acquaintance with the art of logic or reasoning would point out a different method of proceeding to them. What we call a half proof can never amount to more than a suspicion; but there is no such thing in reality as a half proof; for a thing must either be proved or not proved; there is no medium.

“A million of suspicions put together can no more frame a regular proof than a million of ciphers can compose an arithmetical number.

“There are fourths of tones or sounds in music, and these are to be expressed; but there are no fourths in truths, nor in reasoning.

“Two witnesses agreeing in the same deposition, are esteemed to make a proof; but this is not enough; these two witnesses should be clear of all passion and prejudice, and, above all, their testimony should be in every part consonant with reason.

“Suppose four persons of the most respectable appearance were to come and swear in a court of justice that they saw an infirm old man take a vigorous young fellow by the collar and toss him out of a window, to the distance of six or seven feet; certainly such deponents ought to be sent to a madhouse.

“But the eight judges of Toulouse condemned John Calas upon a much more improbable accusation; for there was no one appeared to swear that he had actually seen this feeble old man of seventy seize a stout young fellow of twenty-eight, and hang him up. Indeed, certain enthusiastic wretches said that they had been told by other enthusiasts like themselves that they had been told by some of their own sect that they had heard that John Calas had by a supernatural strength overcome his son and hanged him. And thus was the most absurd of all sentences passed upon the most absurd of all evidence.

“In fine, there is no remedy against such kind of proceedings but that those who purchase their seats in a court of justice should, for the future, be obliged to study a little better.”

This treatise on toleration is a petition which humanity with all submission presents to power and prudence. I have sowed a grain that may perhaps produce a rich harvest. We may hope everything from time, from the goodness of the heart of our gracious monarch, the wisdom of his ministers, and the spirit of sound reason, which begins to diffuse its salutary influence over all minds.

Nature addresses herself thus to mankind: “I have formed you all weak and ignorant, to vegetate a few moments on that earth which you are afterwards to fatten with your carcasses. Let your weakness then teach you to succor each other, and as you are ignorant, bear with and endeavor mutually to instruct each other. Even if ye were all of the same way of thinking, which certainly will never come to pass, and there should be one single person only found amongst you who differed from you in belief, you ought to forgive him, for it is I who make him think in the manner he does. I have

given you hands to cultivate the earth, and a faint glimmering of reason to conduct yourselves by, and I have planted in your hearts a spirit of compassion, that you may assist each other under the burden of life. Do not smother that spark, nor suffer it to be corrupted, for know it is of divine origin; neither substitute the wretched debates of the schools in the place of the voice of nature.

“It is I alone who unite you all, in despite of yourselves, by your mutual wants, even in the midst of those bloody wars that you undertake for the slightest causes, and that afford a continual scene of error, chances, and misfortunes. It is I alone who, in a nation, prevent the fatal effects of the inextinguishable differences that subsist between the sword and the law, between those two professions and the clergy, and between even the citizen and the husbandman. Though ignorant of the limits of their own prerogatives, they are in spite of themselves obliged to listen to my voice, which speaks to their hearts. It is I alone who maintain equity in the courts of judicature, where otherwise everything would be determined by error and caprice, in the midst of a confused heap of laws, framed too often at a venture and to supply an immediate call, differing from each other in every province and town, and almost always contradictory in the same place. I alone can inspire the love and knowledge of justice, while the laws inspire only chicanery and subterfuge. He who listens to me seldom forms a wrong judgment, while he who seeks only to reconcile contradictory opinions loses himself in the fruitless labor.

“There is an immense edifice whose foundation I laid with my own hands. It was at once solid and simple; all mankind might have entered into it with safety, but they, in seeking to ornament, overloaded it with useless and fantastic decorations. The building is continually falling to decay, and they gather up the stones to throw at one another; while I am incessantly calling out to them, ‘Hold, madmen! clear away the ruins with which you are surrounded, and which you yourselves have made; come and live with me in uninterrupted tranquillity within my mansion, that is not to be shaken.’”